



Youth in Russia - The Portrait of a Generation in Transition

A research report by the Swiss Academy for Development

Denis Dafflon

Managing Social Change and Cultural Diversity

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1. Introduction

Between 2005 and 2007, the Swiss Academy for Development (SAD), in close cooperation with the Moscow School of Social and Economic Sciences (MSSES) and the Levada Centre¹, carried out research in the Russian Federation with the aim of conducting a scientific investigation of the main issues and challenges confronting Russian youth. The project was initiated in response to a previous exploratory survey conducted by the SAD in 2002/03 which revealed a very high rate of suicide among young people in the region of Ivanovo (Moscow Oblast). The research consisted of a nation-wide survey of young Russians' living conditions, values, concerns and future opportunities. The main results are compiled in the present report.

Objectives

The main objective of the survey was to examine the life situation, future perspectives, guiding norms and values, patterns of orientation and behaviour of young people living in the Russian Federation in order to (1) provide a comprehensive picture of the situation of Russian youth today, with special emphasis on the North Caucasus, (2) create an empirical database enabling the launching of targeted projects tackling the main issues facing young people in Russia nowadays, and (3) detect early signs of social instability and tension among young people in a country subject to rapid social change. The SAD's instruments for early detection of social instability are based on the concept of anomie, which can be defined as "an anarchic state of crisis-prone uncertainty affecting a broad segment of the population (...)".²

¹ The Moscow-based Levada Centre (www.levada.ru) has more than 15 years of experience in quantitative and qualitative research. It is one of the most capacious research centres in Russia.

² Atteslander Peter, et al., *Comparative Anomie Research, Hidden barriers-hidden Potential for social development*, Swiss Academy for Development, Aldershot, Ashgate Publishing Ltd, 1999.

The concept of anomie

A society can only bear change if its population can apply a meaningful interpretation to social reality. If this is not possible, social change leads to crisis-laden insecurity and instability – in short, to anomie. Anomie describes the lack of compelling norms that accompany processes of rapid social change worldwide; traditional values and norms become vague and disappear; they are no longer able to steer or guide the individual. Cultural interpretative models no longer apply, previously valid behavioural norms and personal skills disintegrate, and social integration breaks down within communities.

Anomie is particularly prevalent when "integration modes are disrupted, for example if social inequalities grow too large, social injustices and a lack of opportunity are apparent or if a growing polarizing of social groups makes moral integration difficult in situations of rapid social changes"³. This reflects the current situation in the Russian Federation.

Anomie serves both constructive and destructive functions. It stimulates innovation and creativity, but it can also lead to apathy, risky behaviour (substance abuse), violence, a shift towards radical (but direction-giving) ideologies, instability and the destruction of social institutions or even whole societies. In short, the concept of anomie is the other side of the coin of social capital, a concept attracting widespread international interest. Social capital encompasses the norms and networks facilitating collective action for mutual benefit, whereas anomie measures the levels and effects of an absence or deficiency of such norms and networks in a society.

³ Huschka Denis and Mau Steffen, "Aspects of Quality of Life- Social Anomie in South Africa", Wissenschaftszentrum Berlin für Sozialforschung, January 2005. Can be downloaded at <http://skylla.wzb.eu/pdf/2005/p05-002.pdf>.

Anomie is reflected in individuals' attitudes towards different aspects of their lives, in opinions and perceptions. Over the years, the SAD has developed anomie scales measuring "the overall (negative) effects of system transition upon individuals with only a few core indicators (...)"⁴. In the present research, the SAD has applied two anomie scales (individual anomie and social anomie) comprising different subscales measuring distrust, discontent, pessimism, estrangement and individual disorientation. The reader will find the list of items used to build the two anomie scales in the annexes at the end of the present report. Significant anomie-related findings are highlighted in the report.

Methodology

The research used both quantitative and qualitative methods. The quantitative survey on which the present report is based was conducted between December 2006 and January 2007. It is based on a standardised questionnaire. The survey consists of a total sample of 2006 respondents and reflects the sex, age, education, ethnicity, region and urban/rural residence of Russians aged 15 to 29.

With the exception of the Southern Federal District, the sample was taken in equal proportions from all federal districts⁵ (federalnyye

⁴ Atteslander, Peter, "A Potential Social Warning Instrument- Final Report on China Anomie Project", Swiss Academy for Development, p. 4; can be downloaded at www.sad.ch/images/stories/Publikationen/sad_china.pdf.

⁵ Russia is divided into 83 administrative regions, named subjects of the Federation. Despite being equal in terms of federal rights, they differ in terms of the degree of autonomy they enjoy. There are indeed six categories of subjects, each of them enjoying a different kind of relationship to federal authorities: republics (21), oblasts (provinces, 46), krai (territories, 9), autonomous oblasts (1), autonomous okrugs (autonomous districts; 4), federal cities (2). To locate them, see maps on page 9. Since 2000, the Russian Federation has been divided into seven federal districts. In each of them a Plenipotentiary Representative of the federal government is in charge of making sure federal law and decisions are implemented. The North Caucasus is included in the Southern Federal

okrugs; FO) of the Russian Federation, Interviews were conducted both in urban and rural areas. Moscow, St. Petersburg and nine other cities with populations over one million⁶ were included in the sample as self-representative entities. Gender balance was respected as 50.5% men vs. 49.5% women took part in the survey. Special attention was given to the North Caucasus⁷ because youth problems and social tensions are known to be particularly prevalent in that very region in the aftermath of the Chechen conflicts; the North Caucasus also has the highest percentage of youth population and the highest youth unemployment rate in the country, factors which exacerbate the tensions. Consequently, it was decided to focus on this region and to conduct one quarter (507) of the interviews in the various subjects that make up the North Caucasus and compare the results with those of the rest of Russia.

The questionnaire was drawn up in close cooperation with the SAD's project partners, namely the Levada Centre, the Moscow School of Social and Economic Sciences (MSESES), the International Organization for Migration (IOM), the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) and the Rosa Luxemburg Foundation. It consisted of approximately 120 closed questions, the purpose of which was to yield a comprehensive picture of the situation of Russian youth today. Thus, it addressed a wide spectrum of social, economic and political issues young Russians are confronted with in their everyday lives. The questionnaire also included numerous questions related to the SAD's anomie scales as described above, the goal being to assess risks of social disorder.

The questionnaire focused on the following main topics:

District. See maps on pages 8 and 9.

⁶ Including Kazan, Nizhny Novgorod, Yekaterinburg, Samara, Stavropol, Novosibirsk.

⁷ The North Caucasus is made up of the following subjects: Krasnodar Krai, Stavropol Krai, and the constituent republics, approximately from west to east: Adygea, Karachay-Cherkessia, Kabardino-Balkaria, North Ossetia-Alania, Ingushetia, Chechnya and Dagestan.

- Education: current and desired education, motivation for education, level of satisfaction with education attained, evaluation of the educational system, values and attitudes towards education, perception of the social role of education and social gratification.
- Labour and employment: employment characteristics, job satisfaction, unemployment risks and fears; social security in the labour market; labour migration and human trafficking.
- Risk behaviour and violence: evaluation of frequency of risk behaviour among young people – drinking, drug addiction, extremism, aggressiveness etc.
- Political activity and civil status: interest in politics, political participation, electoral preferences, trust in political institutions.

Quality control

The SAD commissioned the Levada Centre to carry out the survey. The 2006 face-to-face interviews were conducted by over 200 trained interviewers who were themselves monitored by 40 regional supervisors. A pre-test was conducted in October 2006. It provided first results and led to drafting changes and to a shortening of the questionnaire. The pre-test showed that some sensitive questions were better answered individually and on a separate form.

Qualitative data

In parallel to the quantitative survey, qualitative focus group discussions were held in the Caucasus. They took place in five cities in the North Caucasus (Vladikavkaz; Krasnodar; Makhachkala) and in the South Caucasus (Yerevan, Baku) and focused on the most important problems facing young people (education, employment prospects upon completion of higher education, leisure time activities, health, etc.). These discussions, involving groups of 12 to 20 participants, provided more in-depth knowledge of the situation of youth in that region.

The results were compiled in a publication that came out in summer 2007⁸.

Data entry and data processing

Data input and data cleaning were done using the Levada Centre's customised software. The raw data was made available in SPSS format. The sample was checked for socio-demographic characteristics and weighted by gender, age and education. The SAD monitored data analysis and interpreted results based on scientific literature on Russian youth and compared them with similar surveys conducted in European countries. Feedback on a draft version of the report by experts in Russian affairs has also been integrated.

Structure of the report

The present report contains the most important findings of the survey. It does not include all topics addressed in the questionnaire but summarizes the most interesting and striking results. Particular emphasis is given to socio-economic issues (employment opportunities, working conditions), political issues (trust in institutions; interethnic relations) and personal issues (self-confidence; guiding norms and values). The report ends with a set of concluding remarks and a few recommendations.

⁸ Caucasian Youth: Between the Past and the Future. [Molodezh' Kavkaza: Mezhdru proshlym i budushchim: Materialy issledovatel'skogo proekta]; Moscow; I.B. Balabanov [ed.], 2007, 544 pages (in Russian).



Map 1: The Russian Federation - Federal Districts

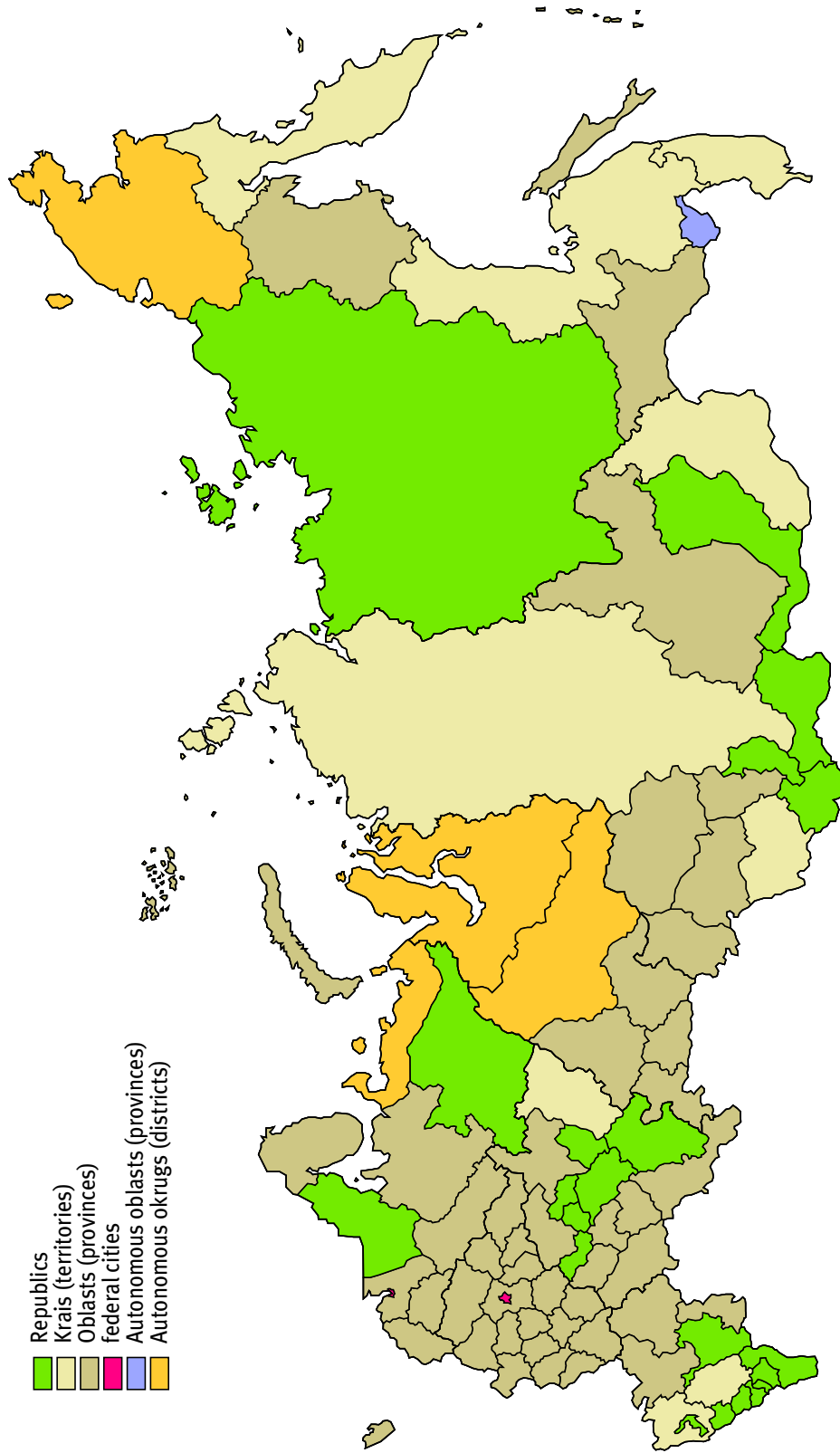
Source: courtesy of http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Federal_districts_of_Russia

1. Central Federal District, 2. Southern Federal District, 3. North-western Federal District, 4. Far Eastern Federal District 5. Siberian Federal District, 6. Urals Federal District, 7. Volga Federal District



Map 2: North Caucasus

Source: courtesy of http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Image:Chechnya_and_Caucasus.pn



Map 3: Subjects (83) of the Russian Federation
Source: courtesy of http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Map_of_Russian_subjects_by_type,_2008-03-01.svg

2. Main research results

Since the breakdown of the Soviet Union, Russia has experienced a radical social transformation. The young, amounting to 35 million people, have been particularly affected by these rapid political, economic and social changes. Since 1991 Russian society has been confronted with a drastic change to its ideological framework: values of utopian egalitarianism have been officially abandoned to be replaced by Western-style liberal thinking. However, instead of improving living conditions, the policies implemented by authorities have dragged a large share of society into extreme poverty. “Russia is unique in the degree of chaos and disintegration that accompanied the transition to a market economy and the implementation of neoliberal reforms⁹”. Capitalism, a market economy and nationalism have rapidly replaced communism, the planned economy and internationalism and most people have had great difficulty adapting. Whereas a few Russians seized the opportunity presented by the breakdown of the Soviet Union to become immensely rich, many Russians have been facing economic hardship over the past 17 years, with unemployment rates reaching peaks of 80% among the young in some regions.

One of the major consequences of these economic changes was the emergence of “means-ends discrepancies”, which defines situations when “social expectations are out of balance with realistic opportunities to reach the desired goals¹⁰”. Whereas many Russians had great personal expectations following the collapse of the Soviet Union, few have indeed been able to attain their goals and many have thus become disenchanting and disillusioned, especially when taking into account the growing gap that separates them from the richest part of society and considering what it takes to make it to the top.

⁹ Passas Nikos, “Global anomie, dysnomie, and economic crime: Hidden consequences of neoliberalism and globalization in Russia and around the world”, *Social Justice* 27, 2000, p. 28.

¹⁰ *Ibid.* p. 19.

The past 17 years have not only been characterised by a change of the economic model and rules. Social norms have changed too; the liberalization of manners has been accompanied by a culture of “money-making”, growing corruption and increasing violence, thus leading to widespread loss of orientation and to growing discontent and distrust among the younger generation. The impact of these changes has been all the greater since they were accompanied by a rapid disintegration of state institutions and disarray in law enforcement.

Another fundamental aspect to take into consideration when analysing the rapid evolution of Russian society is the impact felt from the two Chechen wars. The two conflicts have had profound consequences on Russian society as they contributed greatly to the deterioration of interethnic relations and accelerated the rise of nationalism in the country. The two Chechen wars created a widespread climate of distrust and hostility towards non-Slavic residents, especially those originating from the Caucasus. This rise of nationalism in Russia is also related to an identity crisis which has characterised the country since 1991 and which is a response to the ideological vacuum left over in the aftermath of the dissolution of the USSR. Based on these introductory comments, the present report aims at examining the life situation of young Russians today and at measuring their level of satisfaction/dissatisfaction, trust/distrust, optimism/pessimism in various aspects of daily life.

2.1 Young Russians and Their Parents: A Generation Gap

Over the past seventeen years following the breakdown of the Soviet Union, Russia has experienced profound changes both on a political and on a socio-economic level. Each generation experienced this process differently. Whereas pensioners are often referred to as a sacrificed generation, the young have also experienced the drastic changes that occurred in the country in their own specific way. A majori-

	Gender?	Ethnic origin?	Religious point of view?	Opinions and believes?
Several times	5	2	1	10
Once	5	2	1	8
Never	84	91	92	76
Difficult to answer / does not apply	6	5	6	6

	Age?	Social background, social status?	Illness, disability?	Political views?	Public activity?
Several times	14	2	2	1	1
Once	16	3	4	1	2
Never	65	88	79	86	84
Difficult to answer / does not apply	5	7	15	12	13

Table 1 Discrimination

Have you ever experienced unjust attitudes toward yourself (for example you were refused a job) on the following

ty of young Russians have not experienced the Soviet regime and this sets them apart from the rest of the Russian population. Nostalgia about the Soviet period is still prevalent among many Russian citizens, especially the oldest generation for whom the changes have been particularly bitter. For obvious reasons, Russians under 30 are less affected by these changes and one can say that there is a generation gap in terms of mentality between young Russians and the generation of their parents. Many young Russians (43%) have the feeling that their parents do not understand them and that they do not know what life is like for young people. Social codes have evolved; the ideological framework has disappeared and this has led to new practices to which the young have adapted more easily. The older generations may tend to keep ideological frameworks from the past in the back of their minds and Soviet mentality has certainly not completely disappeared yet. It is thus rather unsurprising to note that a great number of young Russians feel discriminated against because of their

age; age is in fact the most widespread indicator of discrimination young Russians say they are confronted with (see table 1), above ethnicity, sex or religion, which can also partly be explained by the difficulties experienced by young people in finding well-paid jobs and by the frustration that entails (see further).

Other factors also hint at this generation gap; children's upbringing is one of them. Over 40% of respondents say they would not raise their own children the same way they were raised themselves. Compared to other Western European countries, this is quite high: a 2006 survey conducted in Germany shows that only 27% of young Germans (from the Western part of the country) between 15 and 24 said they would bring up their own children in a different or very different way to the way in which they had been raised themselves¹¹. There are various explanations for this phenomenon. Firstly, single parenthood, commonplace in

¹¹ Jugend 2006: 15. Shell Jugendstudie, Fischer Taschenbuch Verlag, Frankfurt a. Main Deutsche Shell, 2006, p. 58.

many Russian households, may not entice young Russians to reproduce the same model as their parents: Russia indeed has one of the highest divorce rates in the world. In fact, it is estimated that at least every second marriage in Russia ends in divorce¹². As a consequence, it is often the mother who is the “pillar” of the family. Single parenthood, however, constitutes a serious social problem in Russia because single mothers are very often confronted with poverty as they have great difficulties making ends meet. This is all the more true when they are also in charge of other family members, for instance grand-parents. Secondly, domestic violence, especially towards women, is prevalent in the country. Over 75% of respondents claim that domestic violence is widespread in Russia, and over 67% say physical punishment in families is widespread. Although these figures do not necessarily reflect reality as they measure perceptions rather than facts, they bear witness to a feeling of insecurity felt by many people.

Despite the high divorce rate, traditional household patterns remain important in Russia. Indeed, it is not uncommon for more than two generations to live under the same roof. A majority of young Russians, even those over the age of 25 and those who are married, still live with their parents and/or other relatives: among those aged between 27 and 29, 21% admit they live together with their spouse and other relatives. This has both cultural and socio-economic causes. Individualistic values are steadily growing in Russia but they are still not as widespread as in Western countries, and it

¹² “The number of registered marriages fell every year by 97,000 or by 16% in the period 1991-98 alone. Furthermore, in 1991, nearly 1 in 2 marriages ended in divorce, but by the late 1990s, there was a 60 percent chance that your marriage would end in divorce. As a consequence, in the last 5 years, 2,800,000 children in Russia live in single-parent families”, G.V. Osipov and V.V. Lokosov, *Sotsial’naia tsena neoliberal’nogo reformirovaniia (The Social Price of Neo-Liberal Reforms)*, Moscow, 2001, p. 94, cited in Williams Christopher, Chuprov Vladimir, Zubok Julia, *Youth, Risk and Russian Modernity*, Hampshire, Ashgate, 2003.

is thus quite uncommon for young Russians to live on their own in a separate apartment. Similarly, it is very uncommon for young Russians to share an apartment with friends. It is also very hard for young Russians to afford to live on their own; there are many housing possibilities available, but the rents are extremely high.

Whereas this situation may on the one hand strengthen inter-family solidarity, it may on the other hand create inter-generational tensions and give rise to frustration, especially since many young Russians are on the labour market at an early age and should therefore theoretically be financially independent. In comparison to their Western European counterparts, young Russians indeed join the labour market rather early. The survey shows that at age 24 65% of young Russians are working, 11% work and study simultaneously and 4% study only¹³. Furthermore, the level of education in Russia is relatively high, especially in comparison with neighbouring countries, and the difficulty of not being able to afford to live on one’s own despite a good level of education may create even more frustration; among young Russians between the ages of 27 and 29, only 6% did not go beyond basic secondary education while almost 60% have a diploma of higher education. It seems that on the one hand, young Russians are aware of the possibilities that are open to them in terms of education and that on the other hand, they tend to feel frustrated, as their personal situation on the labour market is not particularly satisfying, in terms of salary for instance; all this despite a few improvements in the past few years.

2.2 Economy: Great Expectations but Bleak Perspectives

Numerous reports have shown that the economic situation in Russia has changed for the better over the past few years. When Boris Yeltsin stepped down from the presidency in Decem-

¹³ 9% declare they are on maternity leave and 11 % are unemployed.

ber 1999, Russia had undergone a decade of economic hardship, its peak being the 1998 financial crisis during which a large number of Russian households lost most of their savings. When taking over the Russian presidency in 2000, Vladimir Putin aimed at restoring the image of Russia as a great power. Re-establishing Russia as a world power and abandoning the status of the regional power it had been reduced to since 1991 necessitated, inter alia, increasing the growth of the Russian economy and improving Russian citizens' living conditions. Since Vladimir Putin took over¹⁴, Russia's status on the world stage has changed, in part due to the country's increasing share in the production and distribution of natural resources and the impact of this on the international economy. Oil and gas have indeed become major tools of Russia's foreign policy and serve as leverage in its negotiations with numerous foreign countries. The favourable economic climate Russia is presently experiencing has a positive impact on a large number of Russian citizens, including the young, our survey reveals. 52% of our respondents indeed say that their material situation has improved somewhat over the past three years; 37% say it remained stable while only 8% admit it has worsened¹⁵. Bearing in mind the hardship Russian citizens went through in the 1990s, it is obvious that the economic boom Russia is experiencing is a key factor to the present regime's popularity¹⁶. And when it comes to assessing the prospects

¹⁴ The survey was conducted in 2006-2007 and therefore it does not take into consideration the March 2008 presidential elections.

¹⁵ 3% found it difficult to answer the question. These results are confirmed by another 2007 survey conducted in November 2007 by the Levada Center. It shows that for a large number of Russian citizens, the socio-economic situation over the past few years has changed for the better in various aspects: choice in clothing, and basic necessities; choice in food; opportunities to make a lot of money. The survey shows however that a majority of Russians are dissatisfied with the developments in the healthcare system (hospitals and polyclinics). See Russian analytical digest 36/08, www.res.ethz.ch/analysis/rad/.

¹⁶ Political factors play an instrumental role in the present regime's popularity, too. Read chapter 2.3.

of their economic future, young Russians look quite confident as 50% believe their standard of living will improve over the next three years, 22% think it will not change much and only 3% think it will worsen¹⁷. The apparent trust of many young Russians in the bright economic future that awaits the country as a whole is however to be contrasted with the fears that young people in Russia are experiencing on a personal level: unemployment and lack of suitable job opportunities are identified as major concerns by young Russians (see further).

Young Russians acknowledge nevertheless that their standard of living is higher in comparison with that of their parents at the same age (figure 1). The fact that 51% of young people think that their standard of living is higher than that of their parents at the same age shows that despite the difficulties they may encounter, most young people reckon that the present political and economic system may offer them more opportunities and that the fall of the communist regime in 1991 is to be considered a good thing. 36% of respondents claim that their parents' lives failed. Among the reasons for their failure, they mention mainly that it was impossible for them to achieve their goals, to enjoy a career or to make a decent living.

The collapse of the communist regime and the socio-economic transformations that followed have little by little given rise to a middle class in Russia. Although the existence of a Russian middle class is not contested among social scientists, the concept and its scope are still highly debated in the country. It is not our objective here to further engage in this debate. What our survey shows, however, is that an overwhelming majority of young Russians claim that their families do earn enough to afford at least food, clothing and household goods (see figure 2). This seems to confirm that a majority of Russian households have benefited from the economic boom of the past few years. It is striking to see that every third

¹⁷ 25% find it difficult to answer the question.

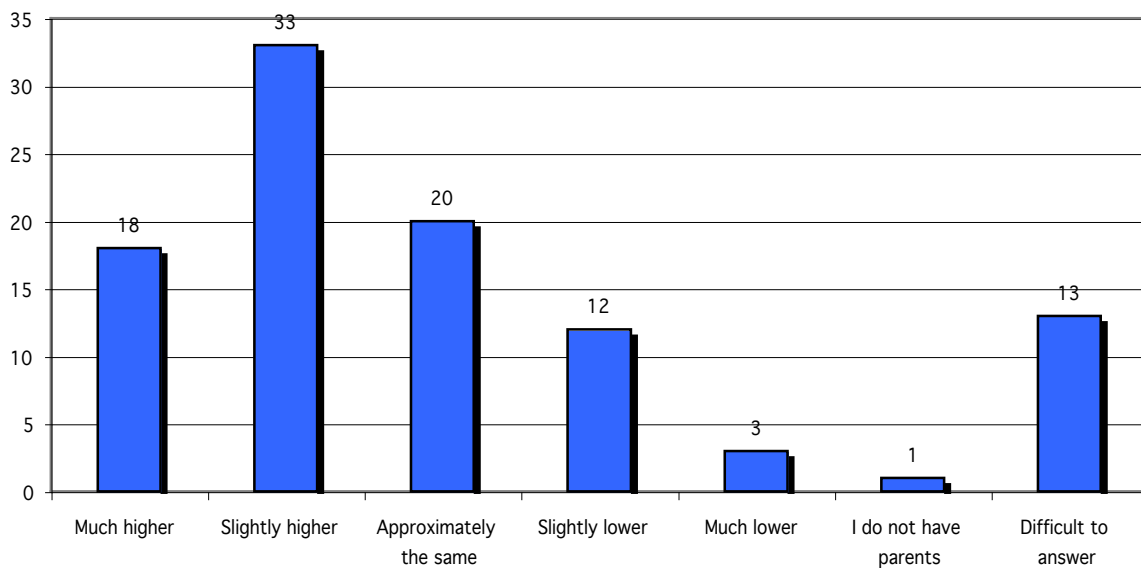


Figure 1 In comparison to the living standard of your parents when they were as old as you are now, is your standard of living higher, lower or approximately the same as theirs? In %

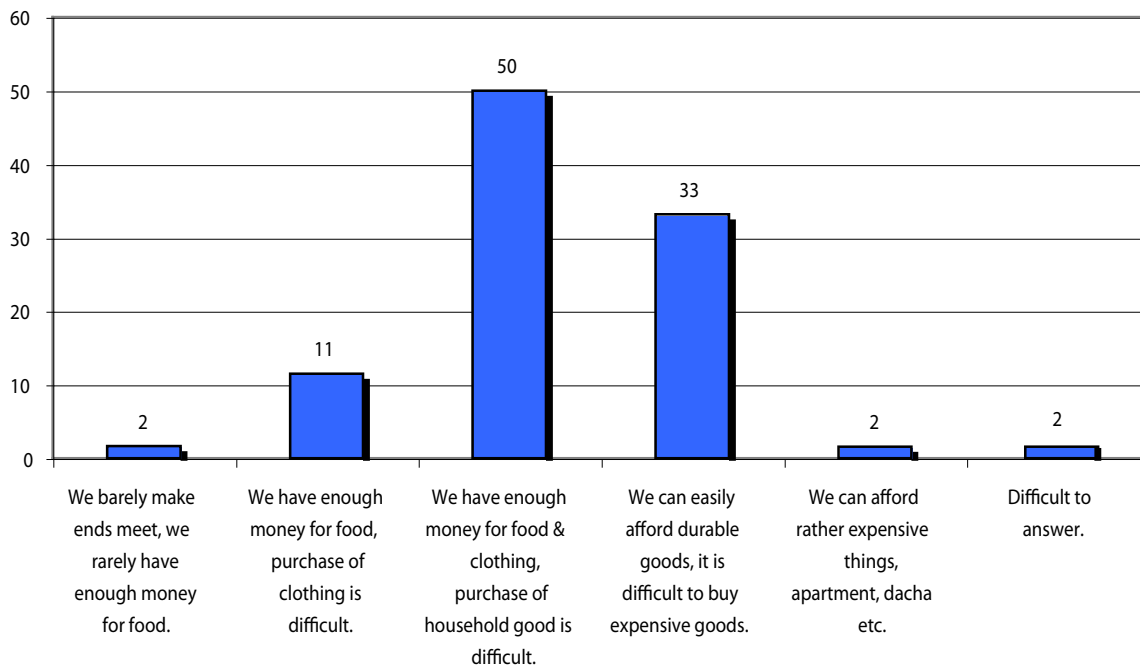


Figure 2 To which of the following groups would you classify your family? In %

respondent reckons that his family can easily afford durable goods. The level of those who can afford expensive goods such as real estate remains unsurprisingly low. On the other hand, only 2% admit they have difficulty making ends meet. One must however be careful when in-

terpreting these figures. Regional differences and levels of subjective poverty must be taken into consideration. A 2005 report¹⁸ shows that

¹⁸ Kortchagina Irina, Ovtcharova Lilia, Prokofieva Lilia, Festy Patrick, Verger Daniel, «Conditions de vie et pauvreté en Russie », Economie et statistique, n° 383-384-

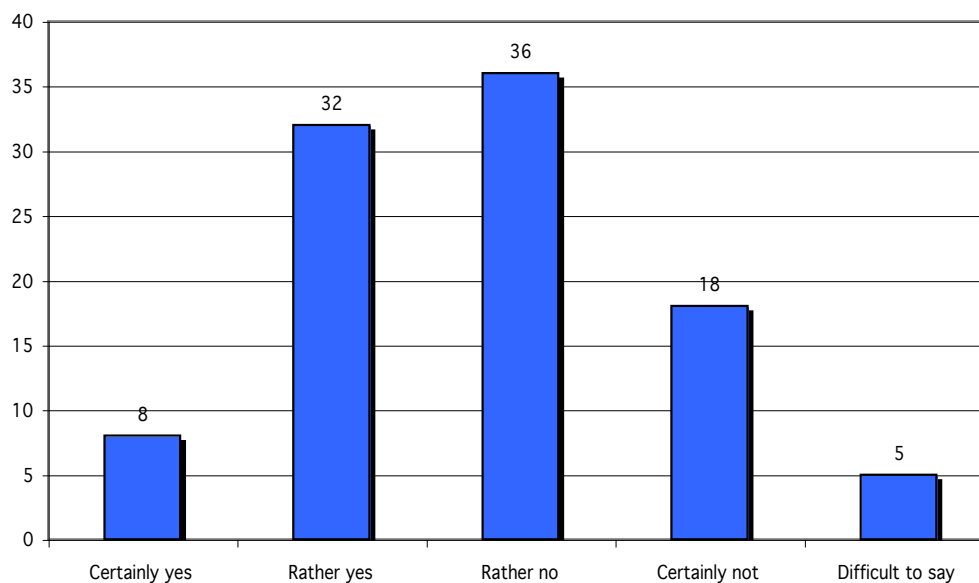


Figure 3 Does your salary correspond to your skills and contribution to the work of your company, organisation? In

subjective poverty¹⁹ is less pronounced among young people, whose feeling of “subjective deprivation” is not as strong as for older people because they still benefit from the protection of family networks. When it comes to “objective poverty”, regional differences are in fact extremely high. Whereas on a national level, the North Caucasus does not stand out significantly, it is commonly accepted that there is growing disparity in terms of standards of living between large urban centres such as Moscow and St-Petersburg, provincial cities and the countryside. Last but not least, young Russians feel that the gap between the rich and the poor has steadily increased (see chapter 2.7) and certain groups are particularly vulnerable in that respect: single mothers, large families and the elderly.

385, 2005. p. 229.

¹⁹ The definition of a rate of subjective poverty is based on «the difficulty to make ends meet, the feeling of poverty, the assessment of the quality of food, the share of budget devoted to food”. Ibid. p. 230.

A majority of young Russians feel that their standard of living has increased and that they will enjoy greater prosperity in the coming years. However, economic well-being is not only based on income. Job-related aspects such as working environment, level of responsibilities or matching between qualifications and responsibilities also play a major role. These observations show that in fact many young Russians, when they do have a job²⁰, are not particularly satisfied with their working environment, which affects their personal well-being. Lack of satisfaction at the workplace may be explained by the fact that more than 50% of respondents admit they do not work in the field they were educated in. Even though the majority of young Russians think they earn approximately the same as their friends, a certain degree of frustration is perceptible when it comes to assessing the level of salaries. The survey shows that the majority (63%) of respondents’ salaries lie between 4,000 and

²⁰ As will be explained further, the youth unemployment rate can be very high in certain regions.

14,000 roubles²¹. A majority of respondents (55%) consider that their contribution to their company is not sufficiently rewarded (see figure 3). According to Irina Trotsuk, this mismatch between qualifications and responsibilities could be interpreted as a sign of youth maximalism; however, it points to the no-choice situation trapping young people in a labour market context short of decent job opportunities for the young²². It shows that many young Russians do not necessarily have the opportunity to make use of their full potential on the Russian labour market. As sociologist Yelena Omelchenko writes, “in contemporary Russia, the authorities are still considering young people as a resource, while young people themselves are striving to be recognised as subjects²³”.

In reaction to this frustration, many young Russians claim that they are ready to go abroad to find work: 59% of them would consider migration as an option, should the opportunity arise. A high proportion (51%) of young Russians are also willing to go abroad to study, despite the relatively good level of the Russian educational system. This can be interpreted as young Russians’ concern about employment perspectives in the country and the difficulty in finding a job corresponding to their qualifications. There is in fact a strong disconnect between the educational and the labour markets. It seems that educational institutions do not sufficiently take into consideration the needs of the labour market. A large number of young Russians are now completing their education in the best universities of Western countries and are thus forming a new generation of

youngsters educated with Western values who may not necessarily return to Russia.

The percentage of young Russians ready to go and live abroad on a permanent basis is much lower (25%), but still concerns one quarter of the respondents. The desire to move abroad is significantly stronger among young people between 15 and 19, and it concerns all socio-economic categories without distinction. Migration has become a pressing issue on the Russian political and economic agenda. While the issue of immigration is more frequently in the spotlight as Russia is now considered the second country welcoming the largest number of migrants in the world after the USA²⁴, emigration and internal migration²⁵ are also major concerns. It is estimated that flows of internal migrants leaving rural areas to try and find work or to study in large urban centres equals the flows of irregular labour migrants from the CIS to Russia²⁶. Central Russia, and especially Moscow and the Moscow region, is the main internal and international migration magnet. Unemployment rates are high in many Russian regions (and neighbouring countries) and therefore, many young people consider moving to Moscow or St-Petersburg to find work. The

²⁴ Russia hosts indeed 13 million foreign-born residents; there are also an estimated 1.3 million to 1.5 million undocumented immigrants (or ‘irregular migrants’), according to a recent study of the World Bank (Ali Mansoor and Bryce Quillin, *Migration and Remittances: Eastern Europe and the Former Soviet Union*, World Bank, 2007). Estimates by the International Labour Organisation (ILO) of irregular migrants currently residing in the Russian Federation are even higher, ranging from three to five million (Tyuryukanova Elena, *Forced Labour Migration in the Russian Federation Today: Irregular Migration and Trafficking in Human Beings*. ILO, 2005), while some 12-15 million migrants are reported by the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) to visit Russia annually mainly with the purpose of temporary employment (Information taken from the IOM website at www.iom.int/jahia/Jahia/pid/811) Altogether, irregular labour migrants are deemed to represent 7.8% of the Russian population of productive age.

²⁵ Read for instance White Anne, “Internal migration trends in Soviet and post-Soviet European Russia”, *Europe-Asia Studies*, September 2007, vol.59: n°6, p.887-911.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 889.

²¹ In 2006-2007, when the survey took place, the average exchange rate of the dollar was 1 dollar to 26.40 roubles. Thus, the salaries mentioned range from 151 USD to 530 USD. The median salary represents 265 USD.

²² Trotsuk Irina, “Problema nasilia v rossiiskom obshestve: “normalnye” i “patologichnye” proiavleniia”, in *Vestnik, The Russian Public Opinion Herald*, 3, (89), May-June 2007.

²³ Omelchenko Yelena, “Russian Youth Scenes at the Turn of the 21st Century, or How the Yobs are Driving out the Informals”, *Kultura*, November 2/2005, to be downloaded at www.kultura-rus.de/.

harsh competition on the labour market, coupled with the lack of control and punishment of illegal work, explains the attitude of the young towards the idea of working unofficially (without a contract): only 23% of respondents would under no circumstances agree to work in the informal economy whereas 69% would consider it as an option should there be no possibility of official employment or should financial and other conditions be good enough. This stance is similar among all socio-economic categories. No difference is perceptible either in the North Caucasus even though the unemployment rate is significantly higher.

These are worrisome findings for various reasons. First, it confirms the lack of state control over labour conditions and practices that have not evolved greatly since the beginning of the 1990s. While Vladimir Putin had claimed re-establishing the so-called “dictatorship of law”, in other words a state of law, as one of his priorities it must be said that as far as labour conditions are concerned, changes have not yet been brought about. The labour market is still massively unregulated and workers’ rights are poorly defended. There is a widespread feeling of impunity among employers, who do not fear sanctions for employing workers unofficially, thus retracting themselves from the obligation to pay social benefits²⁷. Secondly, working unofficially puts employees at risk of exploitation, which can take various forms: inadequate pay, lack of social benefits, physical violence etc. Foreign workers constitute the most vulnerable group since most labour migrants in Russia have neither residence nor work permits, they are also often victims of deceit, racket and blackmail on the part of employers who threaten to report them to the police in the event that they complain about working conditions. Foreign labour migrants are not the only vulnerable group. For instance, young internal migrants moving from

²⁷ The new Migration Record Law and the new version of the Foreigners Law came into force in January 2007. Among other things, they intensify punishment measures for hiring illegal labour.

provinces to large urban centres may be subject to exploitation too when they are not registered²⁸ or lack social networks and social capital. And finally women are also particularly exposed when it comes to the risk of exploitation as they may become victims of human trafficking activities²⁹. The phenomenon is a direct consequence of economic deregulation, lack of state control and protection, and lack of economic perspectives for many young women³⁰. Over the years, Russia has become one of the main countries of origin and transit of trafficked women. Our survey shows that most young Russians have already heard of human trafficking but that precise information on the issue is still lacking: 15% of respondents consider they know a lot about human trafficking in Russia and less than one third of young Russians consider that human trafficking is a widespread phenomenon in the country; 45% say the phenomenon exists but is not a frequent occurrence. Regarding target groups

²⁸ In Russia, every person must be registered when staying in a new place for more than three days. It is a regulation inherited from the Soviet times when the propiska system (registration) was applied to control internal population movement. Although it was abolished in Russia in 1991, propiska was reintroduced under another name (registration) and is “primarily used for economic and law enforcement reasons such as accounting social benefits, housing and utility payments, taxes, conscription, etc.”. Registration is particularly difficult to obtain in cities such as Moscow and St-Petersburg as the city is rather reluctant to welcome new residents. As a consequence, a large number of Russians (but also foreigners) live in both those cities without being officially allowed to.

²⁹ In international law, “trafficking” is defined as the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion or deception, for the purpose of exploitation. Exploitation shall include, at a minimum, the exploitation of the prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labour or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude or the removal of organs. According to this definition, human trafficking is independent of victim consent and is a human rights violation. (Migration in an interconnected world: New directions for action; Report of the Global Commission on international Migration, 2005, p. 39 and Protocol of Palermo).

³⁰ On forced labour and human trafficking in the Russian Federation, read Tyuryukanova Elena, op. cit.

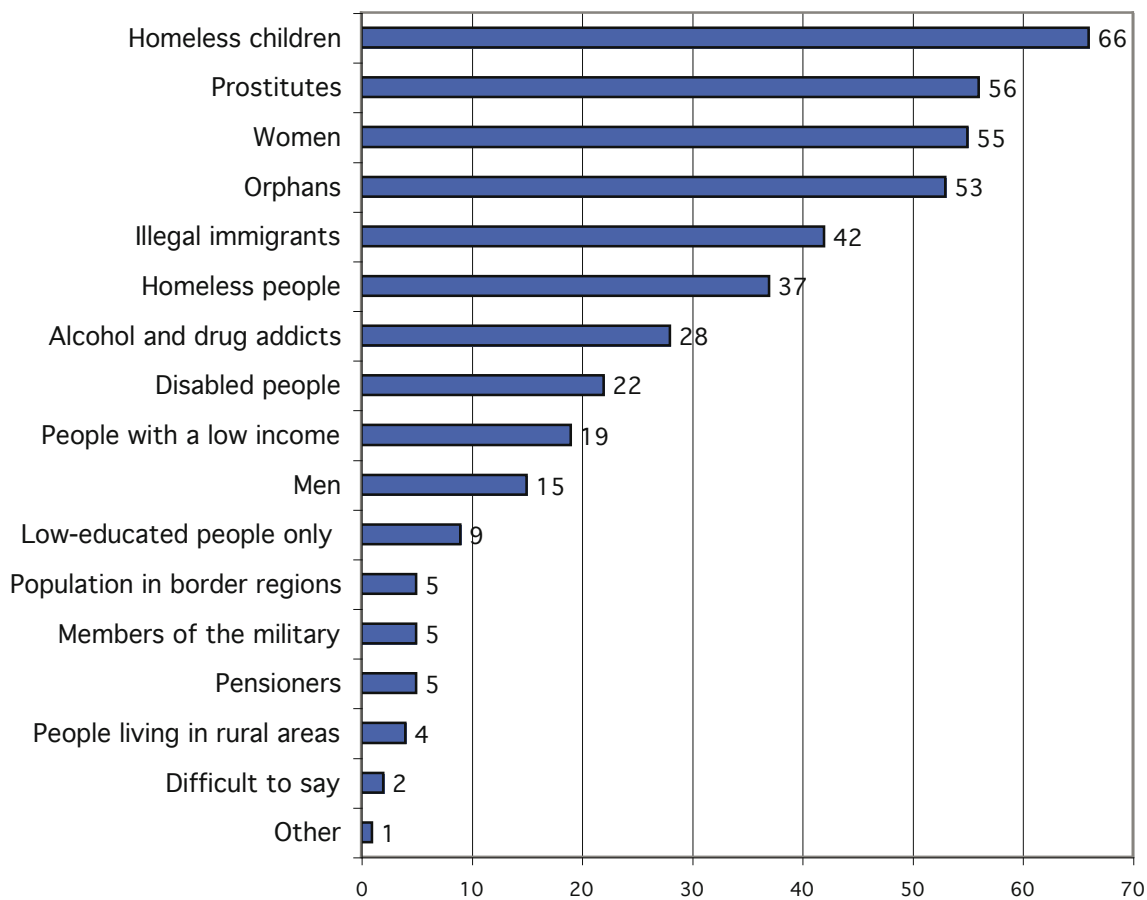


Figure 4 Of the following people, who may become a victim of human trafficking? In %

of human trafficking, the young claim that the most predictable victims are groups that are already particularly vulnerable, namely illegal immigrants, homeless children, orphans and sex workers (figure 4), this perception in fact seems to match the reality as described by experts³¹. Finally, over 60% cite naivety and carelessness as the first reason why people become victims of human trafficking activities. And over 40% of respondents believe that people become victims of human trafficking by accident and by being in the wrong place at the wrong time.

Sex workers are particularly exposed to the risk of human trafficking. Our survey shows, that generally speaking, they lack protection in the country even if there is a will among young

³¹ Ibid. p. 33.

Russian women to introduce tougher rules to punish prostitution and to protect sex workers from employers' and clients' aggressive behaviour (see figure 7). Men, however, are much less inclined to want to see the prostitution sector regulated, to protect sex workers and to punish such activities. Sex workers are all the more under threat in Russia since corruption is frequent among law-enforcement bodies who as a consequence are often reluctant to protect victims.

These are risks that are related to the informal and illegal sector of the economy. However, the risk of exploitation also exists on the legal and formal labour market. And young Russians are not particularly well protected or eager to seek outside protection, should their labour rights be violated. Indeed, facing such a situa-

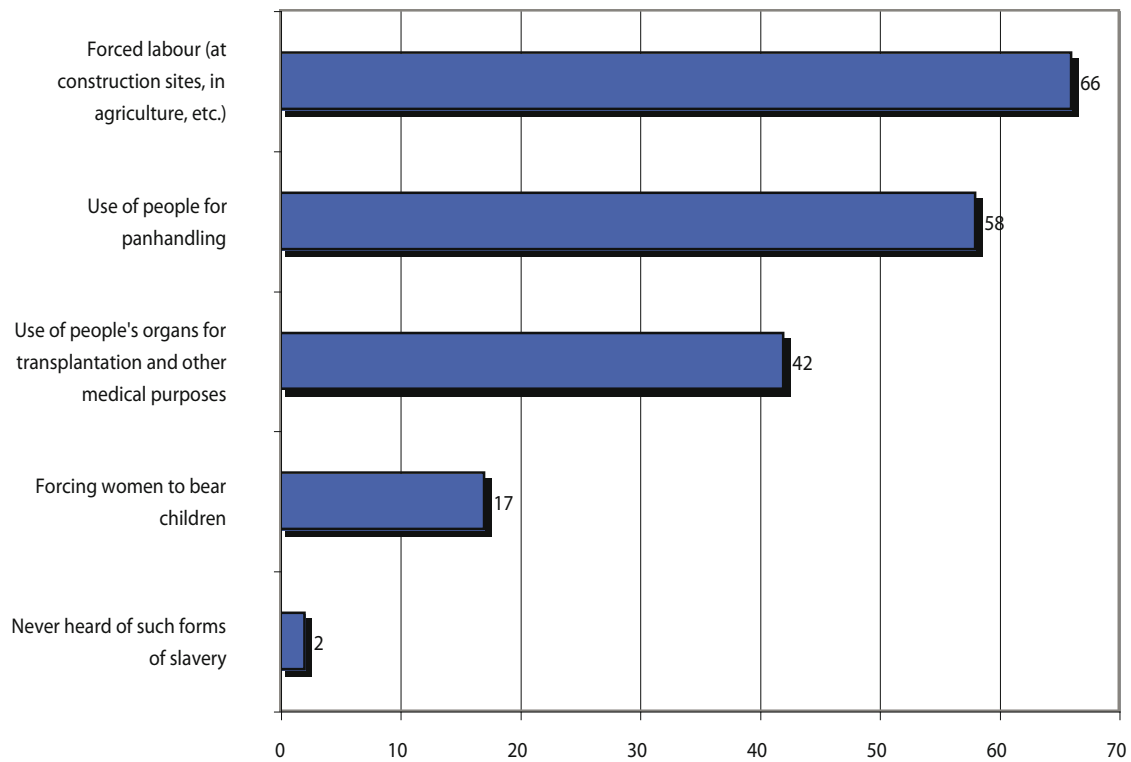


Figure 5 Which forms of slavery do you know about? In %

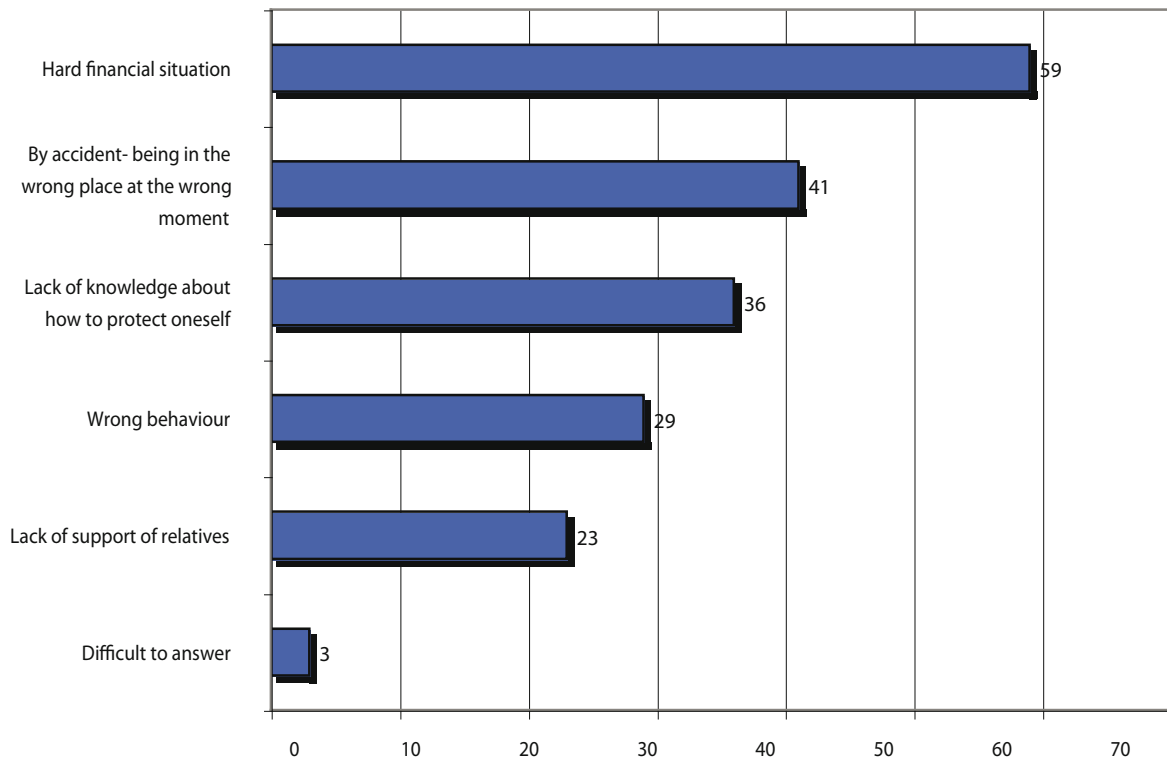


Figure 6 Why are people taken as slaves most often? In %

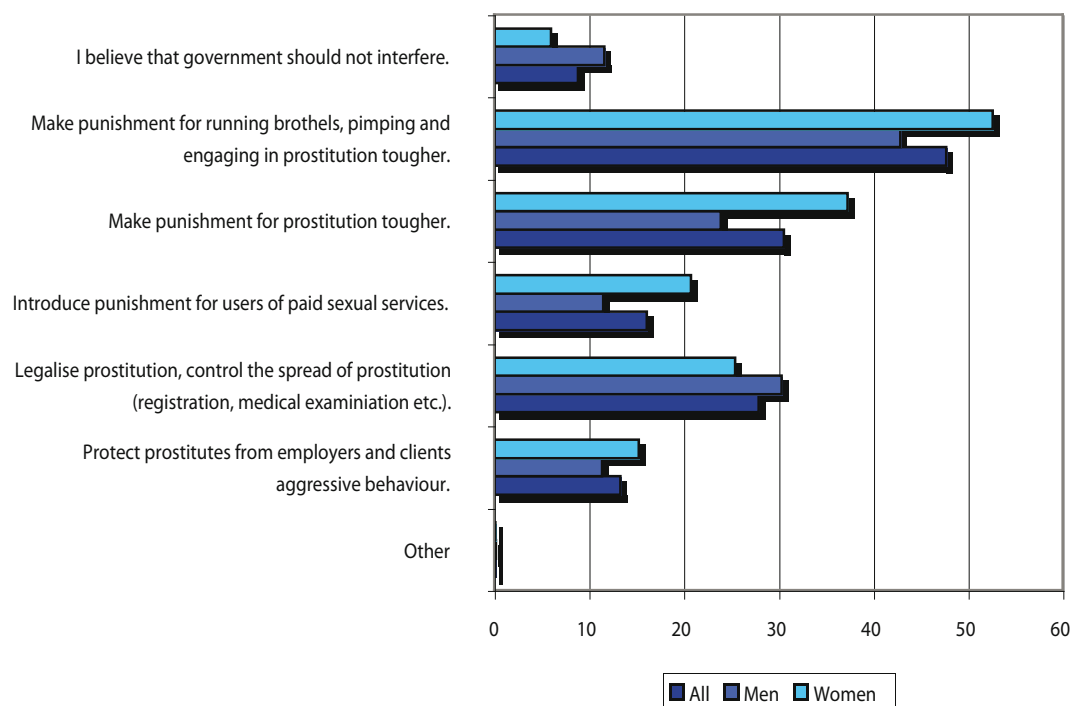


Figure 7 Should the government deal with the problem of prostitution? If yes, what is the first thing it should do? In %.

tion, 43% of respondents would change jobs rather than appeal to a court (16%) or appeal to a professional union (12%)³². This reflects the distrust many young Russians harbour towards official institutions and consequently the fact that most young Russians rely only on themselves to resolve their problems. Strikes do not seem to be an option either, when it comes to resolving conflictual issues with employers: only 9% of respondents think that it is the only effective way to make employers meet their claims.

Young Russians' attitudes towards work have greatly evolved over the last two decades

³² 12% would do nothing, 15% find it difficult to answer the question, and 2% would either undertake protest action, contact the media or do something else. The survey reveals significant differences between Moscow and the rest of the country. In Moscow, the young are more inclined to change jobs (almost 60% versus 43% nationwide), which can be explained by the fact that job opportunities are much greater in the capital and explains why it is the major migration magnet in the former Soviet Union.

and reveal striking tendencies. They seem to have internalised the uncertainty inherent in the labour market as it is developing now. In contrast to the lack of stability on the labour market and a failing social protection system, young Russians want good salaries to compensate the hard work they are ready to put in. Economic well-being seems to be the main incentive, which is also a consequence of the "money-making" mentality that is prevalent in Russia. This is confirmed by the relatively high percentage (if compared to the generations of the Soviet era, for whom private initiative was prohibited) of respondents (20%) willing to start their own business, thereby assuming all the related risks. In comparison to their older counterparts, the new generation has indeed developed a stronger entrepreneurial spirit over the years. Moscow, for instance, has become one of the main business centres in the world, and the capitalist model is very much "en vogue". The compromise of holding an interesting position with a lower salary is only a satisfying option for 16% of young Russians.

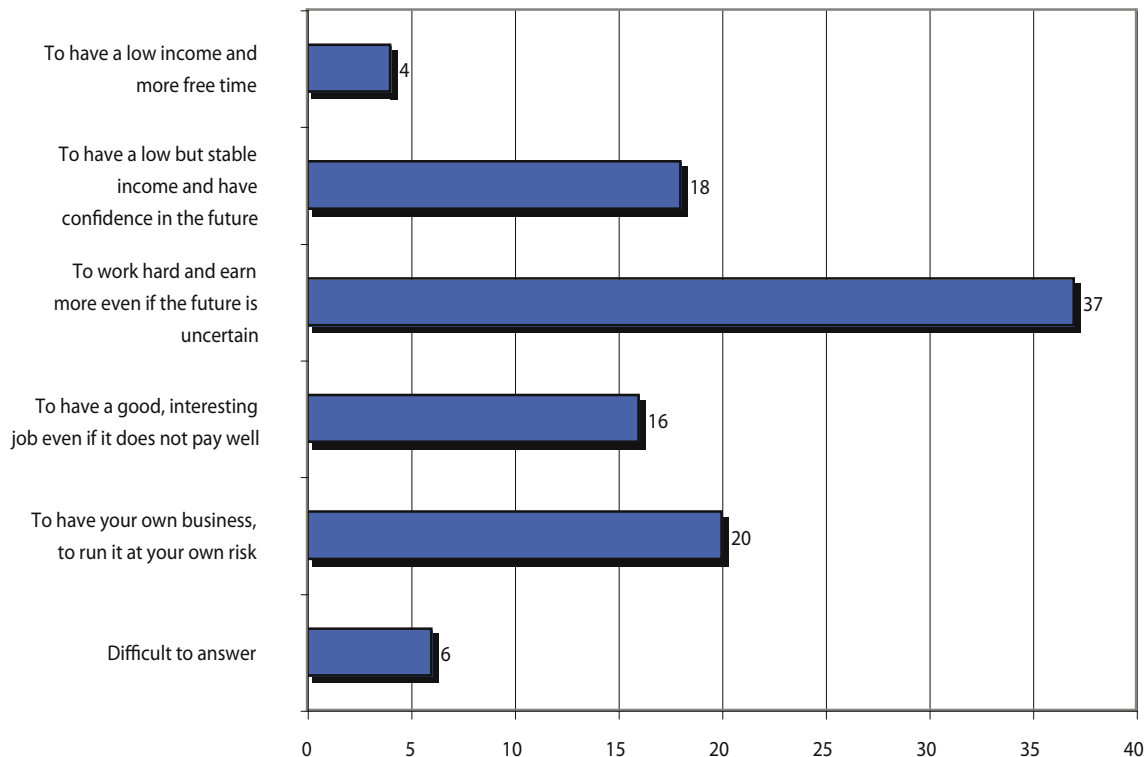


Figure 8 What would you prefer if you had the choice? In %.

Young Russians have high expectations, which can be a source of frustration given the lack of professional satisfaction they attain.

Despite the expectations many young Russians have, they are quite aware of how difficult it is to find a good job and to become successful. Networks and connections (see figure 9) are considered essential to succeed in life by almost half of young Russians (49%). They rank above hard work (48%), good education (43%) and talent/ capabilities (38%). This shows that young Russians are aware of the realities of the job market, which may also lead to a certain frustration when bearing in mind that one cannot become successful without connections.

A detailed analysis of this issue reveals other interesting features: firstly it shows that respondents from the Caucasus are more numerous than those from the rest of Russia in insisting on the importance of networks, of a wealthy family and of a promising marriage to

achieve success, which shows that a large number of young people from the Caucasus have a higher tendency to count on external factors to improve their personal situation, in a context where education, hard work or talent are not considered sufficient to succeed in life.

Secondly, the analysis reveals that there is no significant difference between rural settlements and urban areas (small towns, middle size cities and large cities), with the exception of Moscow, where networks and connections are considered vital by a larger number of respondents than in the rest of the country, thus revealing the extremely strong competition that exists in the Moscow labour market. Finally, people with the highest socio-economic status are by far the most numerous to stress the importance of good education, talent or hard work, while those with the lowest socio-economic status more often than others mention illegal activities or a wealthy family as necessary elements to become successful.

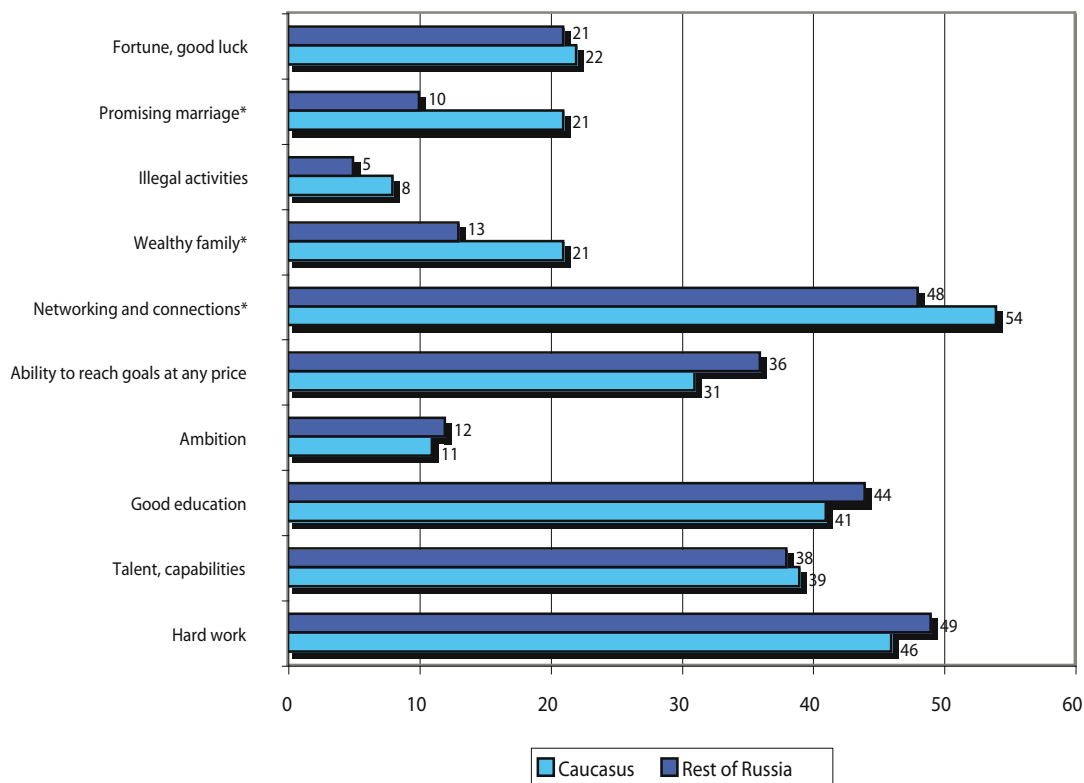


Figure 9 Which of the following would allow one to succeed in a contemporary world? in %
* statistically significant differences

Russia's economic situation has steadily improved over the last few years. Salaries have increased and many young Russians are quite confident that their material situation will change for the better in the next three years. However, the situation is not as bright as it seems. Firstly, there are growing regional differences between provincial cities suffering from outmigration and larger urban centres attracting more and more financial and human capital. Secondly, young people have great expectations that are often difficult to fulfil and may lead to a feeling of frustration; unemployment rates remain high in many regions, working conditions remain unsatisfying, qualifications and responsibilities do not match, and as a consequence many young people consider moving abroad, even if it means working in the informal sector of the economy. Thus, the young remain quite vulnerable on the labour market.

2.3 Young Russians and Politics: Trust in the Political Direction, Distrust in the System

The political climate has evolved dramatically since 1991. When the Soviet Union broke down and the Communist Party was briefly dissolved (a Communist Party of the Russian Federation was recreated in the aftermath), there was great hope among the public for a "free and democratic" state. However, political history has shown that these changes cannot happen overnight and that setting up a democratic state is a long-term process in a country that has been under authoritarian rule for centuries. As a consequence, in Russia people have quickly been disappointed with the promises of democracy³³ that had been made to them by

³³ In the 1990s, following the collapse of the Soviet Union, the notion of democracy among Russians was mainly associated with an expected rise in their living standards.

Russian politicians and the Western elite, as the years following the breakdown of the Soviet Union were characterised by economic hardship, corruption, political scandals and the rise of oligarchs. Little by little, the perception of democracy has changed and the term is now often associated with wild capitalism, growing instability and a corrupt elite. Thus, despite the present's regime popularity, young Russians remain little interested in political affairs and very sceptical, to say the least, about the ruling elite and state institutions.

Only 24% of young Russians claim to be interested in politics. This is relatively low when compared with other surveys conducted in Western countries. For instance the above-mentioned 2006 Shell Youth Survey conducted in Germany shows that 39% of Germans aged 15-24 are interested in politics. It also shows that the interest in politics is higher among the more educated people or among the older age group³⁴. Similar tendencies can be identified in Russia: those who benefit more from the system feel more concerned about the potential changes and thus show a higher interest in public affairs. The overall low level of interest in politics is related to the high degree of distrust Russians have in state institutions inherited from Soviet times and to the feeling that politicians only protect their own interests.

The attitude of young Russians towards politics is in fact full of contrasts. On the one hand, the survey highlights a high degree of distrust towards Russian politicians and institutions, and the political system as a whole, while on the other hand the political direction taken by President Vladimir Putin both on the domestic and international levels are approved by a majority of respondents. To sum up, one can say that young Russians seem to be in favour of the present political direction, but not of the way the system is functioning. The survey shows that there is no will among young Rus-

It was not necessarily associated with a political system based on the separation of powers.

³⁴ 15th Shell Jugendstudie. "Jugend 2006", pp. 105-6.

sians to contest the regime in any way. Despite the numerous failures they point out in the system, they trust the leader in charge of the country and are confident that President Putin will defend Russia's interests. The March 2008 presidential election bringing Vladimir Putin's endorsed successor to power, Dmitry Medvedev, proves this very clearly. The situation looks very different when young Russians express their opinions on other members of the political elite.

On a general level, young Russians are somewhat disillusioned with the political elite of the country: 80% believe that politicians are only interested in being elected and not in what the electorate really wants. Several explanations pertaining to the perception of politicians can be given: in many former Soviet countries, including Russia, a large number of politicians are either former members of the Soviet-time political elite or successful businessmen who get involved in politics to extend their networks and to ensure their economic prosperity³⁵. 55% of young Russians claim that they do not have a good understanding of politics and this can be directly linked to their lack of interest in and their disillusion with the political elite. The distrust of politicians might also be due to the lack of diversity among the political elite: 51% of respondents stress that women are underrepresented in politics and 72% believe that more young people should be involved in public affairs. Generally speaking, 58% of respondents say that politics bores them. There is thus a rejection of the political world, which is common in former Soviet countries.

The widespread distrust of the political elite stands in stark contrast to the trust most young Russians place in the function of President of the Russian Federation and especially in the way Vladimir Putin is leading the coun-

³⁵ Read for instance the recent report on the role of oligarchs in Ukrainian politics: "Ukraine: Quo Vadis?", published by the Paris Institute for Security Studies, Chaillot Paper - n° 108, February 2008. Can be downloaded under www.iss.europa.eu.

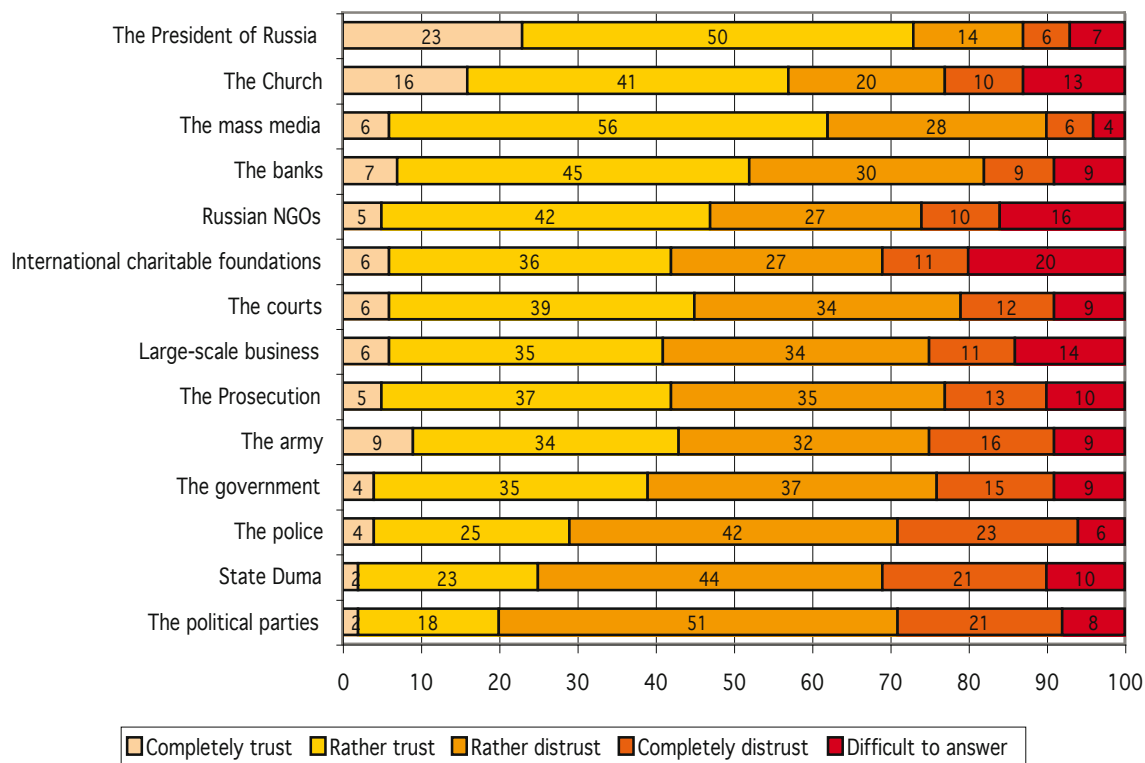


Figure 10 To what extent do you trust the following institutions? In %

try. There is indeed a sharp contrast between the popularity rating of the President and that of other political leaders and state institutions (see figure 10). While 73% of young Russians praise the President's actions, only 39% trust the government. Political parties and the State Duma are even more distrusted by the public. When it comes to state institutions such as courts, the police and the army, rates of trust also tend to be low, reaching 45%, 29% and 43% respectively. On a global level, trust is significantly higher among the youngest age group (15-19). It is also higher among those belonging to the upper socio-economic category. However, the difference is not statistically significant.

These differences between the trust young Russian place in the President on the one hand and other political actors and institutions on the other hand may seem surprising. This can be explained by the fact that over the past few years, President Vladimir Putin managed to

present himself to the public as distinct from the rest of the political class. Despite being the head of State, Vladimir Putin is generally not held responsible by young Russians for the shrinking of individual freedoms, the unemployment rate or the level of corruption, the existence of which they do not deny. Several explanations can be given for Vladimir Putin's popularity among young Russians. Firstly, the image of President Putin as a strong leader is welcomed by young Russians, especially when compared with the image of the country given by President Boris Yeltsin. Secondly, as mentioned previously, Vladimir Putin is widely praised for his economic record which contributed to the improvement of the personal situation of many Russians. Thirdly, and certainly most importantly, Vladimir Putin managed to re-establish the pride of Russia as a world power and to put the country back on the right track by imposing a strong hand on the country. This stance is confirmed by our

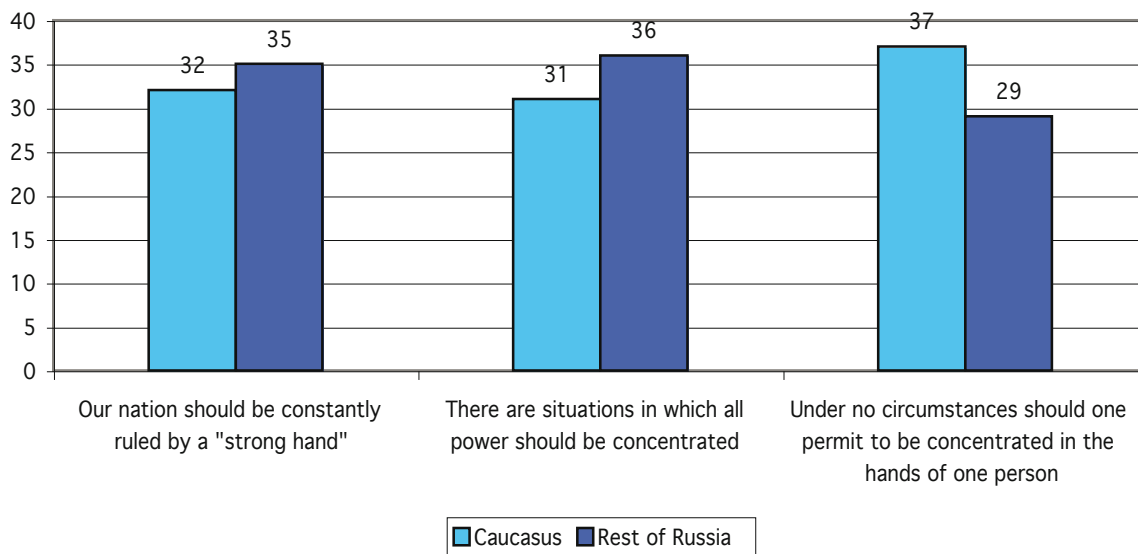


Figure 11 Which of the following statements regarding a "strong hand" would you agree with most? In %

survey. The collapse of the Soviet Union was perceived by many Russians as a humiliation. The 1990s are generally characterised in Russia as a period during which too many concessions were made to Western countries which looted Russia in return. Losing its status as a world power and being reduced to a regional power, which was best symbolised by NATO's intervention in Kosovo in 1998 in spite of Russia's protest, is perceived as a further humiliation in Russia. Vladimir Putin built his political programme on the re-establishment of Russia as a great power inspiring respect and fear. For these goals to be reached on the international stage, he believed that order should first be restored inside the country. "Verticality of power" and "dictatorship of law"³⁶ became his mottos. Whereas he managed to restore the influence of federal institutions over regional governments, he did not succeed in establishing a proper state of law. Young Russians are indeed sceptical when judging the state of the

³⁶ "Verticality of power" refers to President Putin's will to re-establish the power of strong federal structures over the subjects of the Federation, which had been jeopardized during Yeltsin's presidency. As already mentioned, "dictatorship of law" refers to the will to set up a state governed by the rule of law.

country in terms of individual freedoms, the fight against corruption or efficiency of state institutions: for instance, 42% of young Russians admit that state suppression of freedom is widespread or very widespread in the country. By electing Vladimir Putin twice and electing his successor Dmitry Medvedev in March 2008, they showed however that the main task they wanted the President to achieve was to restore order in the country. Our survey shows that there is no ambiguity about this point: young Russians, like their older counterparts, are in favour of a strong hand ruling the country. This observation concerns all age groups and socio-economic categories, as well as all regions of the country. In the North Caucasus, the ideas of a strong hand ruling the country and of concentration of power are not as intense as in the rest of the country, but they remain high (figure 11).

Young Russians do not only want Russia to be ruled by a strong hand, they also want the country to be a great power respected and feared in the outside world: over 41% of young Russians say they would prefer Russia to be a great power which other countries fear and respect rather than a country with high living

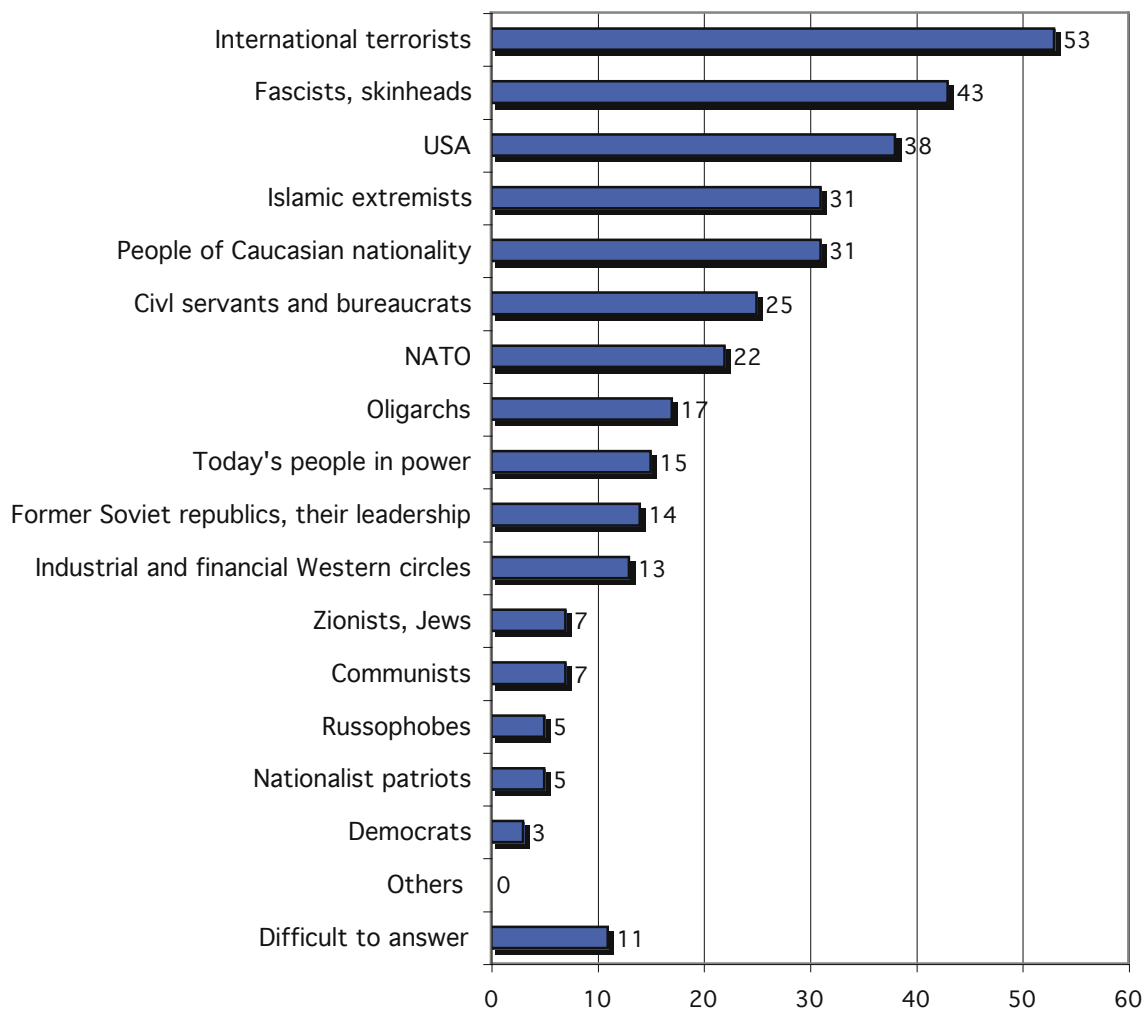


Figure 12 Who would you consider to be Russia's enemies? In %.

standards though not one of the most powerful. Although they do not represent the majority, the percentage of those favouring Russia's prestige and influence on the international stage over high living standards remains extremely significant and highlights the changes that have taken place over the last few years in the public's attitude.

Whereas most of Yeltsin's presidency was characterised by a desire to establish peaceful relations with the West, the Putin presidency has strongly encouraged a climate of opposition with Western powers, mainly with the United States. President Putin has insisted on the need for Russia to distance itself from

any external influence and to act as a strong independent state, in clear opposition to Russia's foreign policy in the early 1990s, when Western countries were considered a model to be followed. The rhetoric of Russia being surrounded by internal and external enemies is reminiscent of the times of the Cold War. However, this stance is supported by young Russians: 60% believe that Russia has many enemies. Among these enemies, international terrorists come first (53%), followed by "fascists and skinheads", the United States, Islamic extremists, people of Caucasian nationality, bureaucrats, NATO and oligarchs (figure 12).

The fight against international terrorism has become an important aspect of Russia's foreign policy since September 11th 2001. On the international stage, it enabled Vladimir Putin to justify his policy in the North Caucasus and his will to resolve the Chechen conflict. This stance is generally approved by Russian citizens. Therefore, it is not surprising to see international terrorists being identified as the main enemies of the country, even now that the second Chechen war is over. Over the past few years, interethnic relations in Russia have gradually worsened³⁷, especially as far as relations between Russians and Caucasians / Central Asians are concerned. The Chechen wars have had an extremely strong impact on young Russians, which explains why today every third Russian considers people of Caucasian nationality³⁸ as enemies. Along with people from Central Asia, people from the Caucasus are the main victims of the rise of nationalism in Russia today. However, the main difference between Central Asians and Caucasians lies in the fact that a majority of the latter are Russian citizens and that thus they are discriminated against as members of national minorities. In addition, the North Caucasus, which is mainly inhabited by Muslims, has one of the highest birth rates in the country, while the rest of Russia is undergoing an important demographic crisis³⁹. Nationalist circles, which are prevalent

³⁷ This is confirmed by another 2007 survey conducted by the Levada Centre. It shows that for only 10% of Russian citizens, the relations between different ethnic groups have improved in 2007; 49% consider that they have worsened while 33% say they have remained the same. 8% of respondents did not answer. See Russian Analytical Digest 36/08, p. 9, www.res.ethz.ch/analysis/rad/.

³⁸ „Nationality“ is to be understood as „ethnicity“. In the Soviet times, citizenship (Soviet for all inhabitants of the USSR) was to be distinguished from „nationality“ (ethnic belonging). This distinction is still commonly used in post-Soviet countries, although it is no longer mentioned in passports.

³⁹ Russia has experienced a loss of population of about 5 millions people since the fall of the Soviet Union. Lower birth rates and higher death rates reduced Russia's population at a 0.5% annual rate, or about 750,000 to 800,000 people per year during the late 1990s and most of the 2000s. As a result, in 2006 a national programme was developed to reverse the trend by 2020. Read for

in the country, emphasize this alleged threat on Russian Slavic and orthodox identity and use it to increase Russians' rejection of people from the Caucasus.

Interestingly, civil servants and bureaucrats are considered enemies of Russia by almost one quarter of young Russians. This confirms the above statement that young Russians have low trust in public institutions. Asked which statement regarding relations with authorities they would agree with most, only 7% claim they usually get what they want. On the contrary, 65% claim that they rely on themselves only and avoid any interaction with authorities⁴⁰. This is clear evidence of the failing institutions that prevail in Russia. The survey shows that distrust in bureaucrats and civil servants is especially high among young Russians belonging to the lower socio-economic category. Young Russians with a higher socio-economic status are proportionally twice as numerous as those belonging to the lower category to say that they usually get what they want from authorities.

For a long time, oligarchs were considered foes who had looted Russia alongside Western countries: they now no longer seem to be the main targets of young Russians' criticism. This shows how the figure of the enemy evolves and changes over the years. The United States also constitute a good example in that respect: they rank third on the list of enemies (38%), which stands in contrast to the high approval of the country in the 1990s⁴¹.

instance the Russian Analytical Digest 35/08, (www.res.ethz.ch/analysis/rad/) entitled to „Russia's Health and Demographic Situation“.

⁴⁰ 11% say that their life is entirely dependent on authorities while 17% find it difficult to answer the question.

⁴¹ For an analysis of the evolution of public opinion on various issues since 1992, read „Russian Public Opinion 2007“, Moscow, Levada Centre, 2008, 208 pages. To be downloaded from www.webfile.ru/2040631 or on the Levada Centre website www.levada.ru.

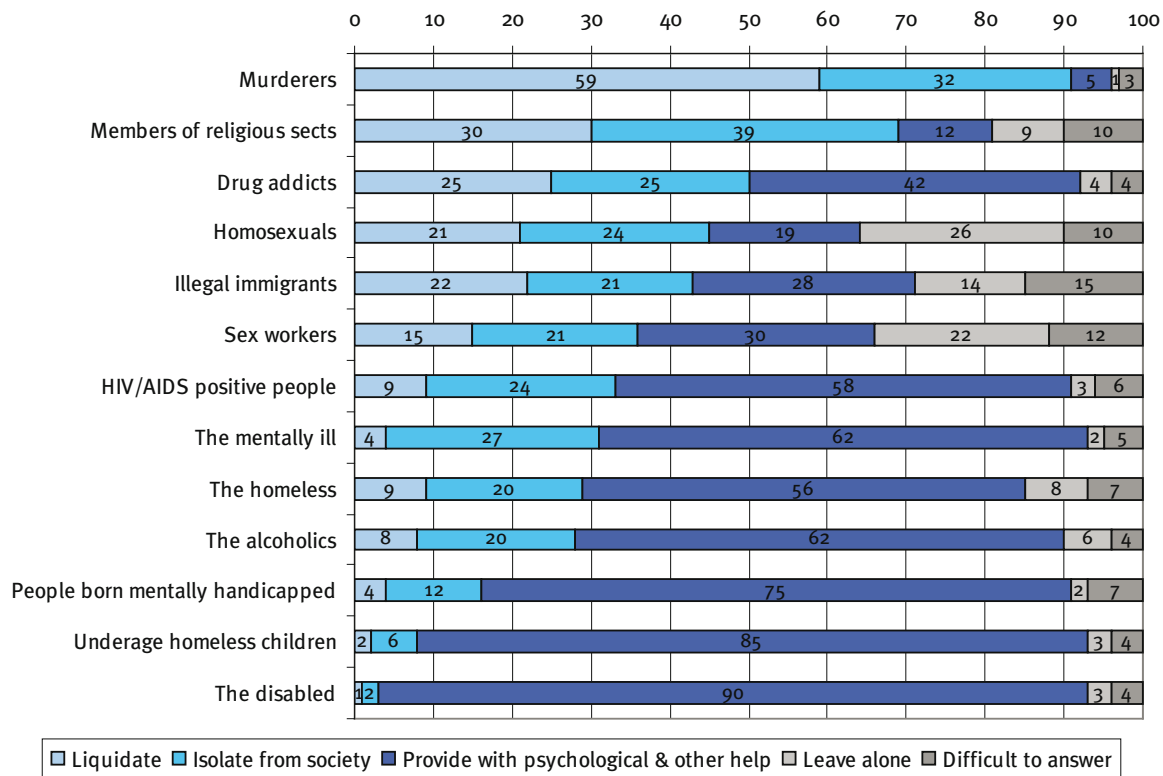


Figure 13 There are people in our society whose behaviour deviates from conventional norms, whose way of living does not correspond to conventional lifestyles. In your opinion, what should be done about. In %

2.4 Interethnic Relations: Growing Intolerance towards non-Russians

Nationalism has been on the rise over the last few years in Russia. The collapse of the Soviet Union, the Chechen wars, the loss of Russian influence in the neighbouring states in the 1990s and the debate about Russian identity are all factors that have contributed to a strong nationalistic revival in the last few years. In the above chapter, we showed that young Russians are in favour of a strong state and several groups are clearly identified as enemies of the country. Whereas nationalist movements have been present on the political scene since the 1980's already⁴², the situation has significantly evolved in the last few years and the situation of national minorities and immigrants, but

⁴² Read for instance Laruelle Marlène, *Le rouge et le noir. Extrême droite et nationalisme en Russie*, Paris, CNRS éd., 2007.

also other marginalised groups, has gradually worsened.

Indeed the survey highlights alarming trends of intolerance among Russian youth. The most alarming of these trends is the attitude of young Russians' towards members of national minorities and illegal immigrants. Questioned on the actions they propose to deal with illegal immigrants, 22% of young Russians consider liquidating them to be the best strategy, while 21% claim illegal immigrants should be isolated from society. Considering that the number of illegal immigrants in Russia is estimated to be between 5 and 15 million people, the potential for conflict is huge. The overwhelming majority of migrants are seasonal workers from former Soviet republics, mainly Ukraine, Central Asia and the South Caucasus republics (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia). Most of them are employed in the retail and construction sectors. Despite

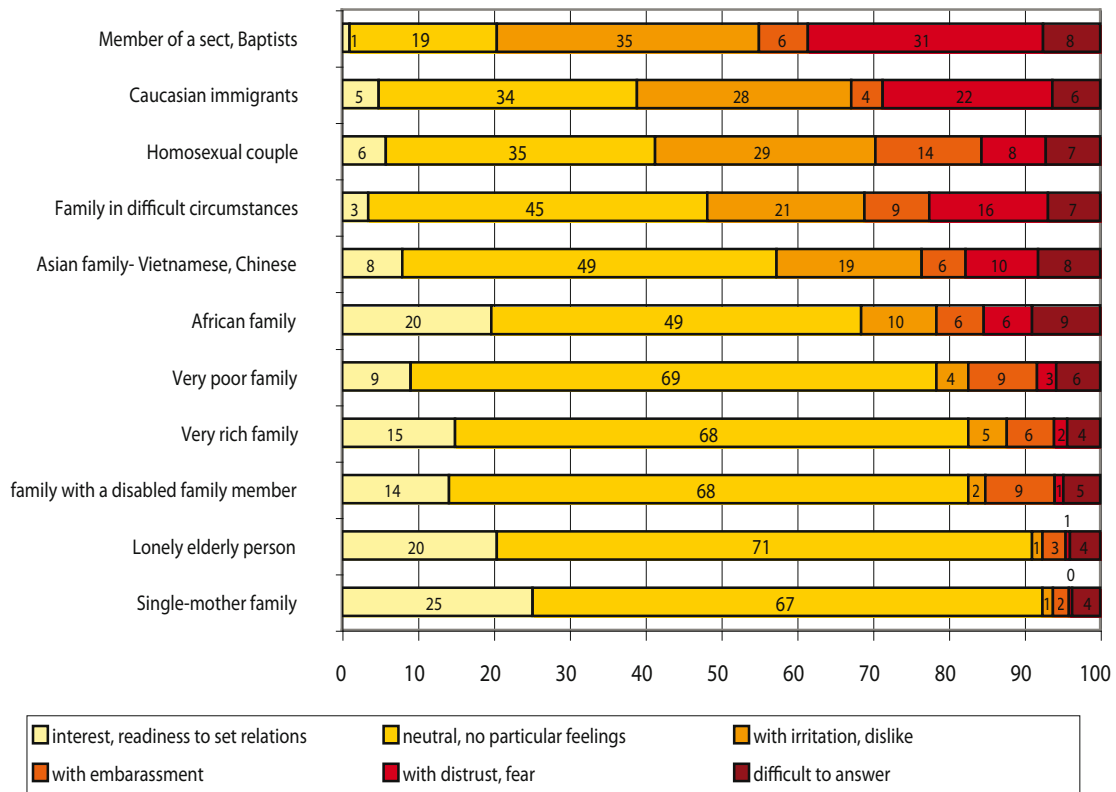


Figure 14 What would be your attitude if the following people moved into a next-door apartment? In %

the demographic crisis Russia is experiencing, migrants are still not perceived as making a positive contribution to Russia’s economy and society. They are mainly seen as a cheap workforce competing for jobs with Russians and contributing to social dumping. Because of the unstable situation in the Caucasus and following the traumas caused by the Chechen wars on Russian society, the situation of people from the Caucasus is particularly alarming despite the fact that many Caucasians are Russian citizens. Consequently, young Russians are more hostile to people from the Caucasus, no matter where they come from⁴³, than to im-

migrants of Asian (Chinese or Vietnamese) or African origin (see figure 14): 55% of young Russians would react with irritation, embarrassment, distrust or fear should a Caucasian family move into the next-door apartment. The percentage is significantly higher than for African or Asian families (respectively 27% and 35%). Even if intolerance towards African people is known to be widespread in Russia, 20% of respondents say that they would be curious and interested in getting to know their neighbours, should they be Africans. Only 5% of young Russians say the same with reference to immigrants from the Caucasus. The distrust of Asian families is partly explained by the growing fear in Russia that massive Chinese immigration may jeopardize Russia’s presence in some unpopulated regions of the country, especially Siberia, part of which used to belong

⁴³ The Caucasus is composed of dozens of ethnic groups in the North Caucasus (Russia) and South Caucasus (Georgia, Armenia, Azerbaidjan). Many of them speak their own languages. They also differ from each other in terms of religion: some are Muslims (e.g.the Chechens) while others are Christians (e.g. Georgians, Armenians).

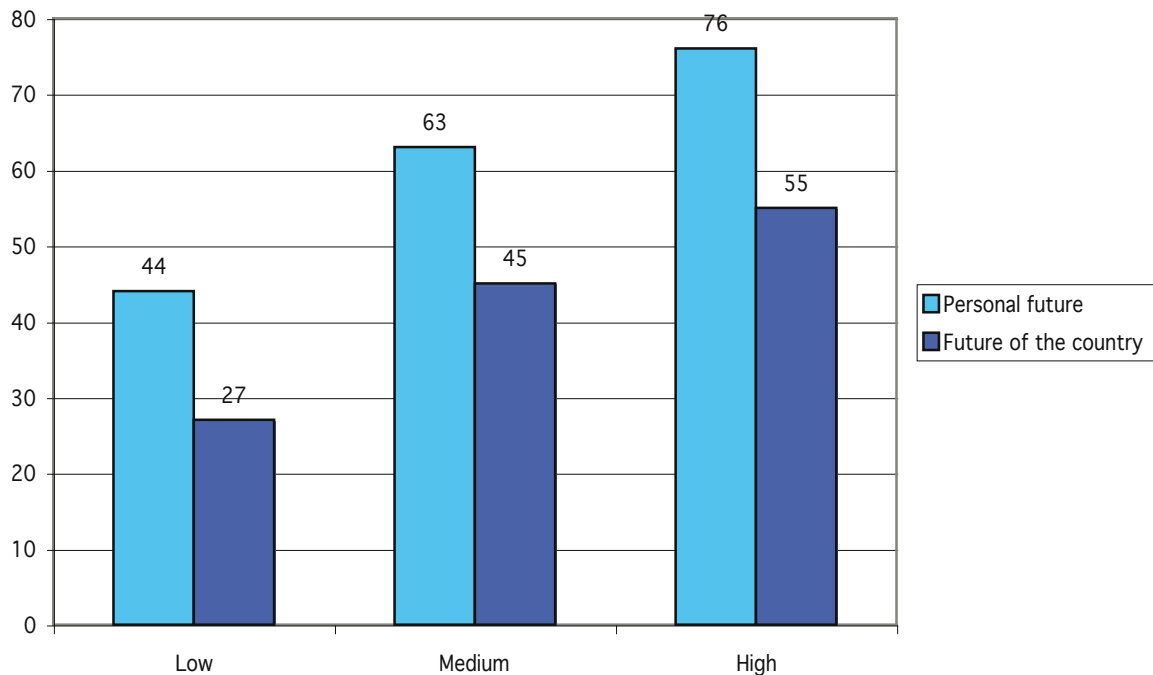


Figure 15 How do you view the future? With confidence and serenity, by socio-economy category

to China⁴⁴. These figures highlight the high level of discrimination against and stigmatisation of marginalised groups that prevails in Russia today, which may have societal consequences and hide potential risks of instability. Our research shows for instance that Muslims in Russia have a significantly lower level of trust in institutions than Orthodox believers. A similar picture emerges when it comes to social instability, where Muslims are also more prone to consider social instability to be widespread in the country. Whether this is a consequence of discrimination Muslims may be subject to in the Russian Federation is another question. In any event, it does show that different treatment of non-dominant groups may have long-term consequences on state cohesion.

⁴⁴ On Chinese immigrants in Russia, read Demoscope Weekly, 347-348, 29 September-12 October 2008, www.demoscope.ru.

2.5 Prevailing Traditional Gender Roles

Traditional gender roles remain dominant in Russian society. For the majority of young Russians, role models are clearly defined. Men and women are expected to assume distinctive roles in society. For 79% of respondents, men are responsible for the well-being of the family, a model still reflected in reality, although the number of economically independent women has generally increased in Russia in the past few years. Men must first and foremost be strong, independent and career-oriented; 80% of respondents say that men should not show their weaknesses and 70% say that appearance does not matter for a man. Over 80% of young Russians reckon that career-orientation and recognition are considered as typical male qualities in Russian society. The role of women is perceived very differently. For 80% of young Russians, the supreme mission of a woman is to be a good mother and a good wife. Women are still expected to choose between family and career, and every third Russian thinks that

clever women should hide their intelligence in one way or another. This data must however be handled carefully as differences may be huge between more conservative rural areas and modern urban centres such as Moscow and St-Petersburg where gender models are significantly different.

Whereas traditional gender roles seem to remain strong among young Russians, the survey shows that attitudes towards unconventional social behaviour are, with few exceptions, quite tolerant. From a predefined list of items, suicide (58%), homosexuality (50%) and abandonment of one's own child (70%) are the only actions that a large number of young Russians clearly consider to be morally unacceptable and deserving of denunciation. Homosexuality is still strongly stigmatised in Russia (see figure 13). With the exception of these three issues, young Russians seem to be quite tolerant with regard to controversial issues: abortion is considered as morally unacceptable by only 30% of young Russians. Russia is indeed one of the countries with the highest abortion rate in the world⁴⁵. Infidelity is not viewed as morally unacceptable by a large number of young Russians; only 28% consider a wife's infidelity to be something that deserves denunciation. A husband's infidelity is even less stigmatised (20%), which gives further evidence that Russian society is more tolerant towards men than women. Divorce is also well accepted as only 10% of young Russians consider it to be morally unacceptable. As mentioned previously, the divorce rate is extremely high in Russia, and it escapes the clutches of the Orthodox Church's moral authority. On issues that are very controversial in many Western countries and give rise to strong debates, young Russians also tend to be permissive: human cloning and euthanasia are considered to be morally unacceptable by 26% and 20% respectively. Only 22% disapprove of the death penalty, on the other hand.

⁴⁵ In 2005, 1,600,000 abortions were registered in Russia; 20% of these involved young women under the age of majority. www.utro.ru/articles/2005/08/23/470519.shtml.

It must be noted however that the death penalty was suspended in Russia only in 1996, and it has not yet been officially abolished⁴⁶.

On the subject of religion, further points of interest emerge. 73% of respondents say they believe in God, while only 6% of young Russians claim they certainly do not and 15% say they do depending on circumstances. In Western Europe, the picture is somewhat different. In Germany for instance, the 2006 Shell Youth Survey comes to the conclusion that 49% of respondents between 12 and 25 can be considered religious. However, quantifying religious practices in Russia reveals a different picture: only 2% say they go to a religious place at least once a week, 7% say they do at least once a month. The overwhelming majority do so less than once a month, for instance on big religious holidays. This confirms that religion is mainly an identity factor in Russia; orthodoxy, which is by far the most widespread religion in Russia, has become part and parcel of Russians' distinctive traits. And the percentage of those believing in God tells us more about Russian identity than about Russians' spirituality.

2.6 Future Perspectives and Main Problems facing Russian Youth

So far, our portrait of Russian youth is full of contrasts. On the one hand, it shows that their economic status has improved somewhat in the past few years (which does not mean they are satisfied with it), on the other hand, a certain degree of frustration and disillusion becomes apparent when assessing the way Russian society is functioning. This is confirmed by the analysis of the questions related to young Russians' main problems and future perspectives. The survey illustrates that young Russians are aware that they can only count on themselves to solve their problems and to be successful. Based on this premise, 60%

⁴⁶ The Russian Federation is indeed still the only member state of the Council of Europe that did not sign Protocol 6 of the European Convention on Human Rights that forbids death penalty with the exception of war times.

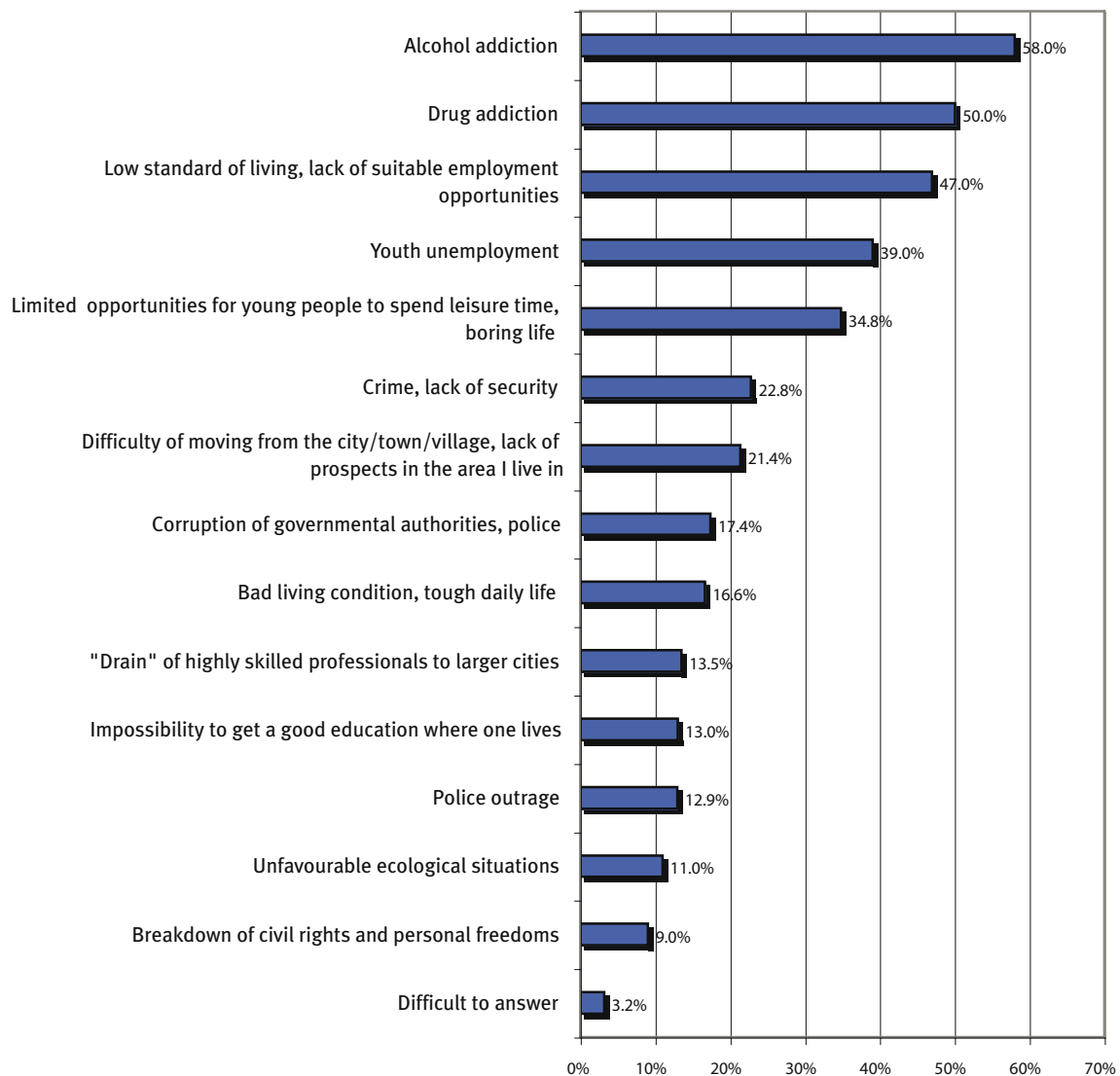


Figure 16 Most critical problems for youth (all of Russia)

of respondents say they look to their own future with confidence and serenity. Confidence in one's own future is especially high among men and among those belonging to the higher socio-economic category (figure 15). No significant difference is perceptible in the North Caucasus. On the average, women are less confident about their own future than men, which can be explained by the roles they are often confined to (see chapter 2.5).

Young Russians do not expect much from the authorities or from society as a whole. There-

fore, when it comes to assessing the future of the country, they are more pessimistic than they are about their own future. Only 39% of respondents say they look ahead to the country's future with confidence, and particularly few of this 39% belong to the lower socio-economic category. Confronted with the difficulties of everyday life, young Russians pay special attention to family, despite the breakdown of traditional family structures and the generation gap described in chapter 2.1. Preserving good relations with parents and friends and maintaining links of solidarity is vital. As so-

	North Caucasus	Rest of Russia
• low standard of living, lack of suitable employment opportunities*	54	46
• youth unemployment*	47	38
• alcohol addiction*	45	60
• limited opportunities for young people to spend leisure time, boring life*	44	33
• drug addiction*	43	51
• difficulty of moving from the city/town/village, lack of prospects in the area I live in*	29	20
• corruption of governmental authorities, police*	20	17
• bad living conditions, tough daily life	17	17
• police aggressive behaviour*	14	13
• impossibility to get a good education where one lives	13	13
• crime, lack of security *	13	25
• „drain“ of highly skilled professionals to larger cities *	10	14
• unfavourable ecological situations *	7	12
• breakdown of civil rights and personal freedoms *	5	10
• difficult to answer	3	3

Data in %, (* significant difference $p < .05$)

Table 2 Most critical problems for youth (in the North Caucasus and in the rest of Russia)

ciologist Lev Gudkov from the Levada Centre says, “this is also a type of adaptation to the repressive state where one may only rely on “one’s” people - relatives, friends, and colleagues⁴⁷”. The importance of interpersonal solidarity networks also explains why young Russians cite the “loss of relatives” as the “event” they are most afraid of, before “terrorist attack threats”, “poverty”, “unemployment” or “national and ethnic conflicts”.

As already mentioned, discontent is perceptible in many aspects of social life, from career prospects in the workplace to environmen-

⁴⁷ Novaya Gazeta, April 8, 2008, “Photofit Picture of the Russian Average Citizen Adaptation to the Repressive State”, cited in Johnson’s Russia List, 2008-#72, 9 April 2008.

tal conditions in one’s region, the absence of leisure structures and opportunities to find a good job where one lives. This explains the large internal migration flows. Dissatisfaction with the weakening of political rights in Russia is also tangible throughout the country, but the aforementioned are not identified to be the most acute problems. Indeed, as figure 16 shows, the main problems young Russians are identifying bear a closer correlation to the social and economic sphere.

On a national level, alcohol and drug addiction are identified by respondents as the most critical issues they have to face, followed by low living standards and the lack of suitable employment opportunities. Considering the disastrous consequences of heavy drinking in

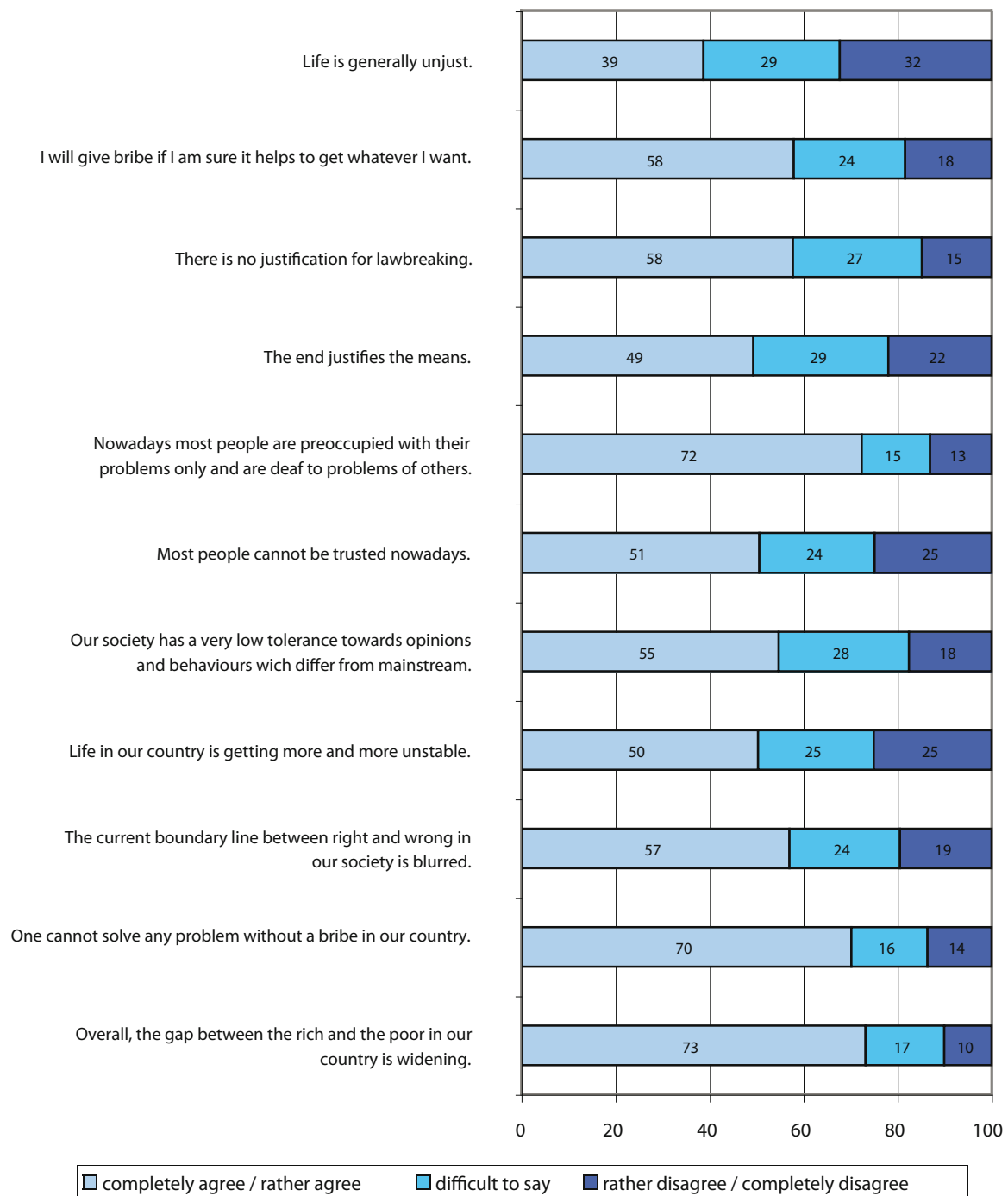


Figure 17 To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements? In %

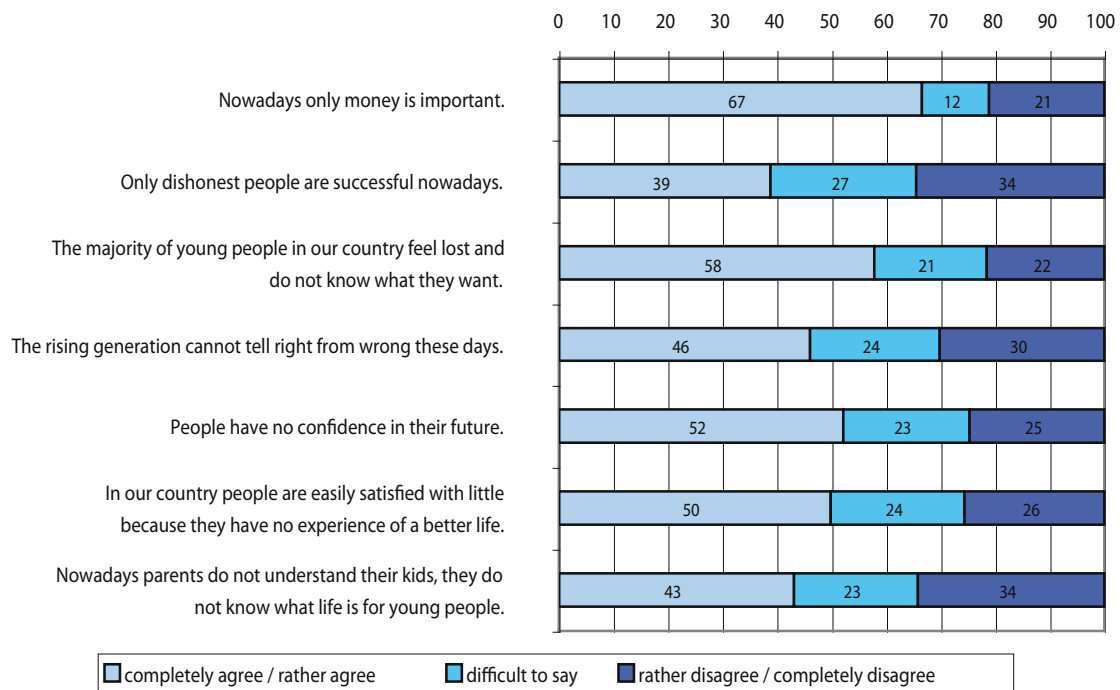


Figure 18 To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

Russia (see further), it is not surprising to see that alcoholism is considered the greatest concern nationwide. It is more surprising, however, to see that the problem of drug addiction is almost considered as vital as alcoholism, since the phenomenon is far less widespread. Drug addiction is certainly viewed by young Russians as an alarming phenomenon because it is quite new and often prevention is still insufficient. Attitudes towards drug addicts are also much harsher than in Western countries as in Russia 50% of young Russians consider they should be either be liquidated (25%) or isolated (25%) from society.

Interesting differences are apparent between the North Caucasus and the rest of Russia. The survey shows that in the North Caucasus, the lack of employment opportunities and the inadequacy of leisure structures are significantly more acute than in the rest of Russia. The unemployment rate is indeed incredibly high in this very region. According to a 2007 report, the official unemployment rate in the Southern Federal District is double that of Russia (14.2%

vs. 7.6%). In the Southern ethnic republics (Northern Caucasus), it reaches 29.9%. When it comes to youth unemployment, rates are even more alarming. The report stresses that in some regions, such as Ingushetia, “virtually the entire population aged 15-24 years is unemployed: according to 2005 statistics, the youth unemployment rate in the Republic is 93.7%”. In Dagestan, the average youth unemployment rate is” almost six times the national average”⁴⁸. This illustrates the large discrepancy that exists today in Russia in terms of economic development between large urban centres and the provinces. If a balance is not found and the economic boom remains limited to Moscow and its surroundings, out-migration will increase in the provinces, meaning that they will gradually be abandoned. In the North Caucasus, out-migration is still not as widespread as it could be. According to a World Bank study, “the 10 Russian regions with the highest share of labour migrants in families in-

⁴⁸ Human Development Report 2006/2007 for the Russian Federation, p. 52 and p. 55 (www.undp.ru/nhdr2006_07eng/NHDR_Russia_2006_07eng.pdf).

	Very widespread	Widespread	Not too widespread	Not widespread at all
Household violence	27	48	21	4
Physical punishment within the family	18	49	29	4
Physical punishment in orphanages	26	48	21	5
State suppression of freedom	12	30	41	17
State control over mass media	14	35	37	14
Rudeness, swearing, aggression at entertainment events	34	50	13	3
Corruption	42	46	11	1
Sexual violence	29	50	18	3
Political manipulation of public opinion	27	50	19	4
Readiness of people to solve problems using their “fists”	24	54	18	4
Police and other “law enforcement bodies” outrage	27	52	18	3
Murder, thefts, robberies	38	50	10	2
Outrage of officials (in schools, universities, state bodies)	24	48	24	4
Social insecurity, violation of rights of socially unprotected groups	28	52	16	4

Table 3 To what extent are the following phenomena widespread?

clude only two regions from the Southern Federal District – Dagestan and Rostov, which rank third and eighth, respectively⁴⁹. Alcoholism is also less frequently cited as a key problem in the North Caucasus, certainly because a large part of inhabitants are Muslims. The North Caucasus being the most unstable region in the Russian Federation, it comes as a surprise to see that crime and insecurity are cited significantly more often as a critical issue in the rest of Russia than in the North Caucasus (25 vs. 13%); a possible explanation for this might be the fact that the North Caucasus’ population has in the past few years been more exposed to and is more used to life in a context of insecurity and thus no longer considers this situation to be particularly critical. Finally, one cannot help notice that political and civil rights

⁴⁹ Cited in *ibid.*, p. 56.

issues appear to young Russians to be much less critical than socio-economic problems. Less than 10% of young Russians nationwide consider the shrinking of civil rights and personal freedoms a vital problem, even though they admit their political rights have shrunk over the past few years. This may be explained by the fact that individuals are confronted with socio-economic issues on a daily basis, whereas potential police aggressive behaviour, corruption, or the shrinking of civil rights and individual freedoms do not frequently concern all young Russians.

2.7 Confusion, Disorientation and Lack of Guiding Norms (Anomie)

The rapid changes that have occurred over the past 17 years in Russia have had dramatic

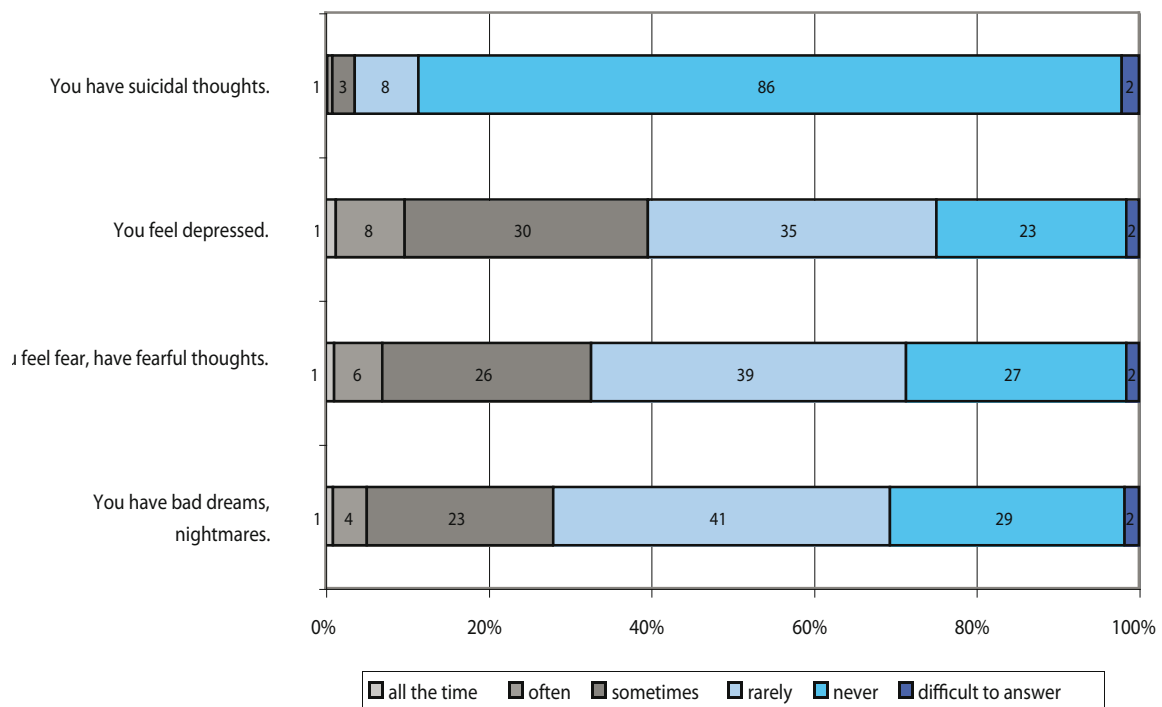


Figure 19 How often do you experience the following? In %.

economic and social consequences. Norms and values have profoundly changed since the breakdown of the Soviet Union and people have had to adapt quickly. From a system praising social equality, Russia has evolved to a capitalist system based on economic and social differentiation. This has had a significant impact on the younger generation which has been raised in a context of social instability and major political changes. As a consequence, feelings of uncertainty and confusion as well as loss of orientation (anomie) are widespread among young Russians.

Disillusion towards the outside world (state institutions, political actors, society at large) is widespread. Corruption is accepted as a common practice against which nothing can be done. It is even admitted that it remains an inevitable practice to solve one's problems. Almost 50% of respondents agree with the idea that the end justifies the means and 58% say they are ready to bribe should it bring them some advantage. Distrust and disillusion are

not only connected with public institutions. It also concerns social life at large: 51% of young Russians are of the opinion that most people cannot be trusted nowadays. Even more significant, 73% say that people are deaf to other people's problems. Consequently, a large number of young Russians (39%) have the impression of living in a society that is unjust and in a country where it is becoming more and more difficult to distinguish between right and wrong (57%). Even if the survey shows that the young seem to be quite satisfied with the country's economic development under Vladimir Putin's presidency, 73% claim that the gap between the rich and the poor is widening. These factors paint a picture of a young generation relatively uncertain about the future and lacking guiding norms and values. The situation looks even bleaker in the North Caucasus where bribery is considered to be more widespread and the gap between the rich and the poor more acute than in the rest of the country, thus potentially leading to a climate of social tension. This gives rise to a situation where

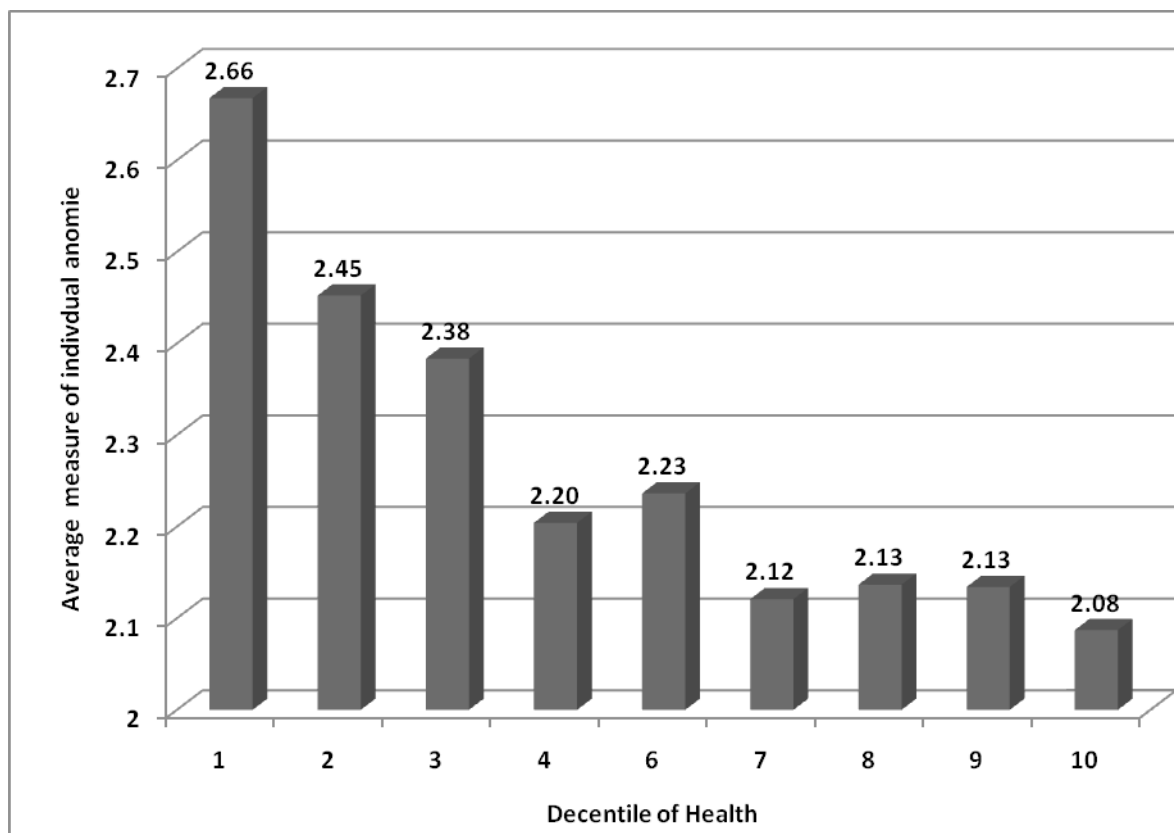


Figure 20 Relationship between individual anomie and perceived health condition

*The 5th decentile is not represented here, because the minimal step at the 36th percentile leads directly to the 51st percentile, for reasons of the Health distribution being rather skewed towards medium and maximal values and values of very good health.

money becomes the main value and where dishonesty is considered the best way to become successful (see figure 18). Thus, many young Russians say that they feel lost and do not know what they want. The majority of them (52%) also say that people have no confidence in the future and that most of them lack ambition and are satisfied with little. These feelings concern men and women equally.

Age has a significant impact on how young Russians assess the situation and it shapes their attitudes and positions. The older they get, the more they claim the gap between the rich and the poor is widening. The youngest generation is also more willing to use any means to solve their problems. Unsurprisingly, socio-economic status also has an impact

on the loss of orientation and on the lack of guiding norms. The feeling that life is generally unjust is stronger among those belonging to the lower socio-economic category. Within this category a greater number of respondents also believe that overall the gap between the rich and the poor is widening, that life is getting more and more unstable and that most people cannot be trusted nowadays. Thus, it can be said that frustration and social anomie are strongest among this group.

The survey shows indeed that the loss of norms and of orientation has a direct impact on young people's psychological state and that their perception of the way they should interact with society is modified. One third (33%) of young Russians admit they do not like to live

by society's rules and 22% claim they are not satisfied with their life. Only 56% say they are happy with the way their life plans are being fulfilled. No significant difference is perceptible in the North Caucasus or in terms of age and gender. The only significant differences appear in terms of socio-economic status. The lower the socio-economic status, the lower the feeling of well-being.

Lacking guiding norms, a feeling of insecurity and of disorientation is also related to a general feeling of social instability. Violence is considered a normal state of affairs by 53% of young Russians.

Table 3 demonstrates that the level of insecurity and perceived violence is extremely high in Russian society. Over the past few years, law enforcement bodies have strengthened their presence in the country and the survey clearly shows that state control is considered to be widespread in the country. There is a common belief that authorities manipulate public opinion, thus confirming the widespread belief that the state cannot be trusted and that, on the contrary, any interaction with them should be avoided. However, this data must be handled cautiously as it indicates first and foremost the (subjective) feeling of insecurity and violence in the country. Even though the effective level of violence and insecurity in Russia cannot be denied, it is interesting to contrast the above table with the type and number of violence-related situations young Russians themselves have really been confronted with: only 3% say they have been victims of assault, 16% say they have been victims of criminal theft and robbery. Only 7% say they have been verbally insulted, humiliated or treated rudely and 2% say they have encountered sexual violence. The only situation that a large number of young Russians say they have been confronted with is street fighting (35%). Even police arrest and *dedovshchina*⁵⁰ apparently only concern a

⁵⁰ *Dedovshchina* is the name given to the informal system of subjugation of new junior conscripts for the Russian armed forces.

small number of young Russians (respectively 7% and 2%). This perceived feeling of insecurity strongly contributes to the general feeling of disorientation young Russians are experiencing. We can hereby identify various symptoms and possible consequences of anomie, from stress-related phenomena to psycho-related diseases and risk behaviour.

2.8 Symptoms and Effects of Anomie; Risky Behaviour and Coping Strategies

“In order for a society to be socially integrative, there must be a balance between aspirations and means to fulfil such aspirations”⁵¹. It is thus vital that “different social groups and social classes have access to the legitimate means. Where people perceive great disparities between goals and means, they seek others means, which can entail deviant behaviour⁵²”. The feeling of frustration and the loss of orientation and norms can indeed lead to various types of reactions or behaviour, and potentially to social disorder. According to our survey, over 75% of young Russians admit they frequently or occasionally do feel anger, irritation or fury which is hard to control. This reveals worrying trends which are directly linked to the current state of violence that exists in Russia. Confronted with strong negative emotions (anger, irritation, impatience, etc.), most young Russians opt for non-violent coping strategies (trying to stay alone and cool down; watching TV; speaking to friends, relatives or parents etc.). Nevertheless, violence and self-destructive coping-strategies (getting drunk; venting one's anger on people around you and on family) remain an option for some of them (respectively 8% (getting drunk) and 12% (venting one's anger on people around you and on family)).

Feelings of depression are common for more than one third of young Russians. This is all the more true when they belong to the lower socio-economic categories: 49% of the latter

⁵¹ Huschka Denis, and Mau Steffen, op. cit., p. 8.

⁵² Ibid.

	Total	Men		Women	
		Rest of Russia	North Caucasus	Rest of Russia	North Caucasus
Almost every day	8	12	8	4	4
1-2 times a week	24	34	27	17	14
Several times a month	26	26	21	31	21
Once a month or less	31	20	27	38	43
Never	11	8	17	10	18

Table 4 How often do you consume your preferred alcoholic beverage? In %, n = 1995

say they feel depressed (sometimes, often or all the time) whereas 37% of those belonging to the highest socio-economic category say the same. The figure is remarkably high among this latter socio-economic category which would be expected to be little affected by psychosocial problems. Suicidal thoughts are also significantly more common among the 15-19 age group in comparison with their counterparts aged between 20 and 29.

Overall, young Russians claim they are in good physical shape: over 90% of young Russians consider their state of health as excellent (9%), good (34%) or normal (48%). However, there are differences depending on the socio-economic category they belong to: the higher the socio-economic status, the better the subjective state of health. This may be directly related to the widening gap between the rich and the poor, and to the feeling of many Russians that the situation of the healthcare system is worsening in Russia today⁵³ and that a two-tier system is gradually being introduced, one for the wealthiest segment of the population and one for the others. Our research shows that the factors that reveal the most significant correlations with the perception of one's state

⁵³ See for instance Russian Analytical Digest 36/08. Can be downloaded at <http://se1.isn.ch/serviceengine/FileContent?serviceID=PublishingHouse&fileid=2316ED31-41E5-E1A3-4114-27C3C2DED643&lng=en>.

of health are individual anomie and gender. Individual anomie explains more than 8% of the health variance while gender explains 6%, with females tending to report poorer health. A multiple regression for health ($r=.414$) with the following factors (individual anomie; social instability; satisfaction and gender) shows that these factors predict 16.9% of the health variance, a figure that should not be neglected, considering the huge impact of other factors such as genetics or food on one's health condition⁵⁴.

Figure 20 illustrates the relationship between health and individual anomie. It shows that 10% of respondents reporting the poorest state of health score very highly on the individual anomie scale and are significantly more anomic than other groups. The graph depicts a progression whereby young people reporting a poor state of health tend to be more anomic whereas at the other end of the spectrum young people reporting a good state of health have a tendency to be less anomic on the individual level. However, it must be highlighted that differences are especially significant among those claiming the worst state of health, while differences among the healthiest group of respondents are relatively small.

⁵⁴ See annexe 2 for the correlations table between perceived state of health and the above-mentioned factors.

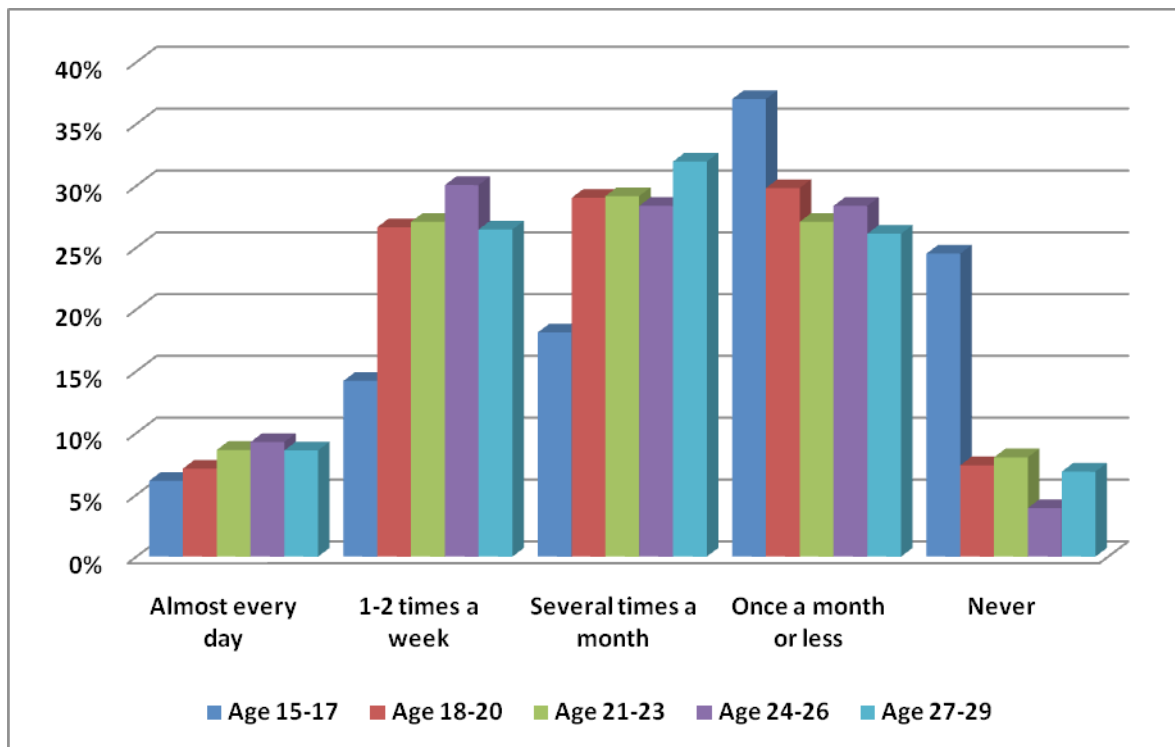


Figure 21 How often do you drink alcohol?

Further, there is a risk for young Russians of turning to alcohol and drug abuse to compensate for their lack of orientation and guiding norms. Abusive alcohol consumption is indeed one of the main dangers young Russians are facing, since heavy drinking has cultural roots in Russia⁵⁵. This applies mainly to men whose life expectancy (59 vs. 73 for women) is on a par with that of many Southern developing countries. Alcohol abuse is considered by a majority of young Russians to be the main problem facing Russian youth nowadays (see chapter 2.6).

Our survey reveals that a minority of young Russians admit they consume alcohol on a daily basis. These figures can be misleading however, as the frequency of consumption does not give any indication about the quan-

⁵⁵ On alcohol consumption in Russia, read "Gesundheit-probleme", *Russland Analysen* n° 161, March 2008. Can be downloaded at www.laender-analysen.de/russland/pdf/Russlandanalysen161.pdf.

tity being drunk. Sociologists are unanimous in saying that heavy drinking is widespread in Russia.

Beer is the most popular alcoholic beverage among young Russians. 7% say they drink beer every day while 23% say they have beer once or twice a week. Beer has become a very common beverage since the mid 1990s, "partly due to increased international trade and homogeneity of drinking behaviour"⁵⁶. Beer has become particularly popular with young people. Its relatively low alcohol content and its affordable cost account for its attraction⁵⁷. Consequently, studies have shown an increase in the number of young Russians who have got drunk at age **13 or younger**: 37% in 2003 in comparison to

⁵⁶ "Interpersonal Violence and Alcohol in the Russian Federation", Policy Briefing, Violence and Injury Prevention Programme, WHO Regional Office for Europe, 2006. Can be downloaded at www.euro.who.int/Document/E88757.pdf, p. 1.

⁵⁷ As a consequence, many young Russians consider beer rather as soft drink than as a proper alcoholic beverage.

	Social Anomie			
What is your attitude towards...?	disapprove or rather disapprove	Approve or rather approve	Effect size (d.=)	Sig. p=
Limonov followers, „national bolsheviks“	3.397	3.678	.443	.001
anti-globalists	3.418	3.554	.215	.035
fascist groupings	3.444	3.696	.397	.014
national minorities	3.462	3.494	.050	.639
music fanatics	3.478	3.496	.028	.651
radical patriotic organisations	3.427	3.542	.181	.046
religious extremists	3.424	3.804	.599	.000
skinheads	3.456	3.558	.160	.182
football fans	3.497	3.449	-.076	.211
religious sects	3.460	3.592	.208	.158

Table 5 Extremism and Social Anomie
Significant measures appear shaded.

	Individual Anomie			
What is your attitude towards...?	disapprove or rather disapprove	Approve or rather approve	Effect size (d.=)	Sig. p=
Limonov followers, „national bolsheviks“	2.244	2.427	.287	.037
anti-globalists	2.224	2.423	.312	.002
fascist groupings	2.235	2.695	.721	.000
national minorities	2.245	2.192	-.083	.441
music fanatics	2.266	2.247	-.029	.651
radical patriotic organisations	2.233	2.222	-.017	.866
religious extremists	2.209	2.474	.414	.011
skinheads	2.215	2.412	.309	.010
football fans	2.236	2.265	.045	.466
religious sects	2.215	2.552	.528	.006

Table 6 Extremism and Individual Anomie
Significant measures appear shaded.

33% in 1999⁵⁸. Vodka is the second most consumed beverage; however, only 1% say they drink vodka on a daily-basis and 3% once or twice a week. Here again, these figures do not say much about drinking patterns. It is, however, common practice for Russians to drink large quantities of alcohol; there is indeed a high social tolerance for heavy drinking in Russia.

Although alcoholism mainly affects men, drinking patterns of young women are evolving too and women also partake in heavy drinking. Wine, champagne and beer are the most popular alcoholic beverages among women: 70% of young women admit they consume these beverages; almost one third of young women say they drink vodka (in comparison to 58% of men). Alcohol consumption is less frequent in the North Caucasus. Religion certainly explains much in terms of the differences apparent between the North Caucasus and the rest of Russia. Almost 20% of young Russians from the North Caucasus say they never drink alcohol, which is double the number of tea-totallers in the rest of the country. Women in the Caucasus are also less inclined to consume alcohol.

Drug abuse can also serve to fill the void felt by many young Russians as a result of their dissatisfaction and lack of future perspectives. Drug addiction is identified by young people as one of the most critical issues they are confronted with. However, only 1% of young Russians admit they take drugs, while 6% say there was a time when they used to and 92% say they do not take drugs and have never taken any. The proportion of people who consume drugs is certainly higher but many respondents may have felt reluctant to answer this question. When questioned about whether they count drug addicts among their friends and acquaintances, over 35% of young Russians said yes, which seems to prove that drug consumption is more widespread than the self-identification question shows. Women are more likely to stay

⁵⁸ "Interpersonal Violence and Alcohol in the Russia Federation", op. cit., p. 2.

away from drugs than men (97% versus 88%). The insignificant number of respondents who claim they do take drugs does not enable us to measure potential correlations with anomie.

Drug and alcohol addiction has direct consequences on interpersonal violence in Russia. Various studies show that a majority of Russians arrested for homicide were under the influence of alcohol. It is estimated that alcohol is a direct or indirect cause of every third death in Russia⁵⁹. Sexual abuse is also widespread in Russia: 19% of young women reckon they have had sex against their will (versus 12% of men) and heavy drinking may be a major cause.

The analysis of the correlations between religion-related issues and anomie also reveals some interesting findings. It shows that those who clearly believe in God or clearly admit they do not tend to be lower on the individual anomie scale. On the other hand, those who do not clearly answer the question and feel confused about their religious beliefs also tend to be more disoriented on a general level (high score on the individual anomie scale).

Finally, young Russians can turn to (political) radicalism to vent their frustration. And it is a fact that nationalism has been on the rise over the past few years. When young people feel confused, have no confidence in the future and consider society to be unjust, this paves the way for nationalistic leaders (and leaders of other marginalised non-political groupings) to recruit these "losers" of the transformation processes that took place in Russia. This phenomenon, in turn, contributes to the rise of violence in the country, to a tense social climate and to difficult relations between the different ethnic groups making up the country, as well as with foreigners, be they students or workers.

⁵⁹ "Die Rolle des Alkohols bei gewaltsamen Toden in Russland", William Alex Pridemore, *Russland Analysen* n° 161, March 2008. Can be downloaded at www.laenderanalysen.de/russland/pdf/Russlandanalysen161.pdf.

Our analysis shows that there is a significant correlation between individual anomie and the approval of certain radical movements (fascist groups, religious sects and religious extremists especially). What this means is that respondents who are more anomic on the individual level also tend to approve more than others of the aforementioned extremist groups. Interestingly however, approval of “radical patriotic organizations” does not correlate with individual anomie while approval of “fascist groupings” does; this indicates that a clear distinction is made by young Russians between the different variations of political radicalism in Russia. Interestingly also, social anomie does not correlate with the same items as individual anomie, clearly showing that both anomie scales are not measuring the same thing.

The analysis of other similar questions confirms that respondents scoring highly on the social anomie scale tend to be easier targets for radical movements. The analysis of the question related to the attitude adopted towards marginal groups (see figure 13 p. 29) indeed shows that the former tend to approve of eliminating marginal groups more frequently than other respondents, and thus that the more disoriented young Russians feel, the more likely they are to favor radical action (including violence) towards marginalized social groups.

Finally the analysis shows that respondents who would like Russia to be constantly ruled by a strong hand significantly differ in terms of social anomie from those who oppose this stance and from those who would approve of a strong-hand approach in certain circumstances. Respondents who agree that Russia has many enemies today on average score slightly higher on social anomie. These details reveal the risk that the most disoriented segment of the Russian Federation might lean towards radicalism. The lack of guiding norms and values, the lack of perspectives and the confusion present among these young Russians may entail social consequences that must not be neglected.

3. Conclusion

Thanks to an in-depth analysis of life for young Russians, this research report has sought to single out the most striking findings in order to detect potential risks of social disorder in Russia. The present report has brought to the fore various aspects that are worth repeating here. The following findings can be singled out:

1. Differences between the North Caucasus and the rest of Russia

One of the objectives of the survey was to point out significant differences between the North Caucasus and the rest of Russia. The hypothesis was that the potential for social disorder and anomie symptoms was higher in the North Caucasus because of the greater instability in the region (political tensions, high unemployment rate, lack of leisure structures, potential for out-migration). Even though the responses to various questions are similar in the North Caucasus and in the rest of Russia, the survey nevertheless shows various statistically significant differences. The most striking difference pertains to the issues identified as the most critical for youth. Young people in the North Caucasus are particularly concerned about the lack of suitable work opportunities, youth unemployment and the lack of leisure structures while in the rest of Russia, social issues (alcoholism and drug-consumption) come first. This shows that the North Caucasus is suffering heavily from the consequences of the political instability in the region in the aftermath of the Chechen wars. Economically, the region is backward and the potential for out-migration is high. The survey illustrates the growing discrepancy between urban centres and the provinces. Youth unemployment, frustration and boredom are factors that may contribute to an increase in the potential for radicalism in the North Caucasus, and therefore, attention should be given to that region.

2. High level of intolerance and growing nationalism

One of the most striking findings of the survey is the high level of intolerance towards (illegal) immigrants and members of national minorities nationwide. Although, as such, these results are not surprising, bearing in mind the growth of nationalism in the country, they are still alarming. Nationalist movements have been mushrooming in the country over the past few years and 50% of the population agree with the motto “Russia for the Russians”⁶⁰. The idea that ethnic Russians should be given priority over ethnic groups has risen recently. This puts into question the whole idea of Russia as a multi-ethnic state as it aims at denying, or at least reducing the importance of Russia’s ethnic, linguistic and religious diversity. This stance is not limited to nationalistic groups; it is also widespread among a large number of ordinary Russian citizens, including young people, as our survey shows. In provinces characterised by a high unemployment rate and failing leisure structures, young people are easy recruitment targets for nationalist movements. The young have little confidence in the future of the country, have no trust in public authorities and tend to be disillusioned about the evolution of Russian society (acceptance of violence as a normal state of affairs; the widening gap between the rich and the poor; the high level of corruption). This lack of perspectives lay the seeds for frustration and radicalism.

3. Widespread feeling of insecurity despite good economic results

Despite the improving economic situation, young Russians feel rather insecure about the future. Insecurity concerns both economic and social spheres. As far as the economy is concerned, young Russians feel particularly troubled about the lack of employment opportunities. They seem to be quite sceptical about the chances of finding a job corresponding to their skills and therefore many consider migrating

⁶⁰ “Russian Public Opinion 2007”, Levada Analytical Center, Moscow, 2008, p. 158, downloadable at www.webfile.ru/2040631.

out of Russia to improve their personal situation. More striking is the feeling of insecurity on the socio-political level. The survey shows that according to the vast majority of young people, Russia is a violent society: 53% consider that violence is a normal state of affairs in the country and more than 75% of respondents say that interpersonal violence (sexual violence, household violence, physical punishment) is widespread. This perceived feeling of insecurity in fact does not necessarily match the objective level of violence but it strongly contributes to the general feeling of disorientation experienced by young Russians.

4. Money- the new ideology

The rapid economic changes that have occurred since the breakdown of the Soviet Union in 1991 have had a significant impact on young people's attitude to the labour market. One of the most interesting findings is the way young Russians have accepted the labour market's uncertainty while at the same time their way of thinking has evolved. The survey shows that many young Russians only rely on themselves to succeed and that they are ready to work hard in exchange for a good salary. One in five young Russians is willing to open his own business, and this reveals a mental shift from Soviet times. Given the difficulties of the labour market, many a young Russian is ready to work without a contract. In a country where youth unemployment is high, reaching peaks of almost 80% in some regions of the North Caucasus, this hardly comes as a surprise. It must however be noted that this phenomenon puts young people, especially migrants and women, at risk of exploitation.

Another interesting finding pertaining to the labour market is the way in which young Russians value economic success. In Russia nowadays, being successful means making money; and there are two sides to this coin. On the one hand, this stimulates ambition: many young Russians say they are ready to work hard and are willing to open their own business. On the

other hand, this creates a society in which being rich is almost the only way to gain social recognition and the only criteria to measure success. As a consequence, this situation gives rise to a generation for whom money is the most important value and which is ready to use any means to achieve its objectives. Dishonesty is considered the key to economic success. This generates a society based on unbridled competition leaving many "losers" to fall by the wayside. Indeed, in a society where youth unemployment is rife, the difficulty young people encounter in making their ambitions match reality creates frustration with and distrust of society. A majority of young Russians have no trust in public institutions and in society at large, and believe that the gap between the rich and the poor is constantly growing.

5. Anomie is strongest among the underprivileged

The survey displays significant differences on various issues in terms of socio-economic status. It clearly shows that among those young Russians belonging to the lower socio-economic category anomie indicators are more present. They represent the category that suffers most from the way Russian society is evolving. They avoid public authorities as much as possible and are more prone to say that life is generally unjust and that no one can be trusted. They are also more likely to suffer from symptoms of depression, the survey shows. Thus, it can be said that loss of orientation and an absence of guiding norms is particularly acute among young Russians with the lowest economic power, and that this group is potentially the most likely to adopt deviant behaviour (drug abuse, alcoholism, political radicalism etc.).

6. Anomie is correlated to some manifestations of radicalism

An in-depth analysis of correlations between anomie scales and risky behaviour shows that there are significant correlations in so far as

approval of radical organisations and movements are concerned. Those young Russians who feel the most disoriented are more likely to approve of radical groupings and to back violent measures to deal with marginalised social groups. They are thus easier targets for leaders of those political or social movements. Authorities should take this issue seriously and strive to offer young people good perspectives for the future in order to prevent radical groupings from taking strong root.

7. Gender differences exist on some issues, but they have no significant influence on anomie

Interesting findings can be highlighted in terms of gender differences on various issues touched upon in the survey. On a global level, women are less confident about the future of the country, but also about their own future. They are more afraid than men of violence-related events such as robbery, criminal assault or terrorist attacks for instance. The explanation certainly lies in the prevailing traditional gender roles that still dominate in Russian society, in the more unstable position women are often confined to, and in the violence that exists in the country and which often targets women. Domestic violence, often due to heavy drinking, is considered by young Russians to be widespread in the country. Women are also more likely to consider life as unstable and unjust, probably because most of them have fewer opportunities to pursue a career since society expects them first and foremost to be good wives and mothers. Furthermore, the risk of economic instability is especially high for women due to the high divorce rate in the country and the fact that single mothers constitute one of the most groups most vulnerable to poverty.

However, when it comes to anomie trends, no significant gender difference is perceptible. Despite the aforementioned findings, our survey shows that gender does not have any influence on anomie.

8. Limited risks of political disorder / social tensions

Despite the portrait of a generation worried about the future, lacking employment perspectives and feeling distrust towards society and institutions, risks of political disorder and social tensions in the country seem to be limited for at least two reasons. Firstly, the level of distrust towards state institutions is compensated for by a great level of trust in the regime put into place by Vladimir Putin. The young praise what he has accomplished since taking over the presidency in 2000 and do not hold central authorities responsible for the socio-economic difficulties they are confronted with. According to a majority of young Russians, president Putin managed to put the country back on the right track. Young Russians praise the president for the regime in place; obviously no guarantee can be given as far as satisfaction with authorities on the local level is concerned, especially when considering the rampant corruption in the country. However, central authorities have taken back sufficient control over regions to face potential situations of conflict. The North Caucasus is the only region where political and social tensions are still rife. Secondly, civil society in Russia does not seem to be mature enough for social protest. Russians are considered to be rather apathetic when it comes to defending their rights. And the survey shows that young Russians are concerned about socio-economic issues first and foremost. Political rights seem to be much less important to them and therefore, the chances of seeing a Ukrainian scenario similar to the Orange revolution take place in the next few years in Russia are very slight. On the contrary, central authorities and the party of power have managed over the last few years to bring young Russians together in order to promote ideas of the “United Russia” party⁶¹.

⁶¹ For instance the „Nashi“ youth movement.

9. Recommendations for a sustainable youth policy

Problems exist; they cannot be denied. Young Russians feel concerned about rising alcoholism and drug abuse as well as the lack of interesting employment opportunities as well as of leisure and youth structures. Preventative measures to combat any form of addiction must be taken. The state also needs to give serious consideration to the unemployment rate in the provinces, as it encourages young Russians to leave the regions they live in and look for a better life in urban centres, thus contributing to the growing imbalance between Moscow and St-Petersburg on the one hand and the rest of the country on the other hand.

Although the last few years have been characterised by economic growth, young Russians seem somehow to be frustrated when it comes to assessing the labour market as it is difficult, firstly to find a job and secondly to find one that corresponds to their qualifications. As a consequence, many of them are ready to work unofficially, thus putting a large part of this generation at risk of abuse from employers. Lack of employment opportunities is one of the major challenges facing youth worldwide and specific action should be taken in that respect. In Russia, the problem of youth unemployment is also coupled with that of international migration and a high level of intolerance. A demographic crisis is underway in Russia, and therefore the demand for migrant workers ready to accept the 3-d jobs (dirty, dangerous and difficult) is on the rise and will soon become even more crucial in order to sustain the country's economic growth. However, as the survey shows, Russian society does not seem to be ready to welcome large numbers of foreign workers as numerous stereotypes are still widespread⁶² and labour migrants, especially from the Caucasus and Central Asia, are victims of discrimination and stigmatisation.

⁶² Such as the idea that most migrants are engaged in criminal activities and that they put public health under threat by bringing infective diseases in Russia.

Measures to combat intolerance among the young in Russia and actions to promote the positive effects of the presence of migrants in the country are required. Overall, the survey illustrates the need for measures to combat any form of discrimination and to protect groups that are particularly at risk in Russia. This is a vital condition for Russia's development as a peaceful, prosperous and multi-ethnic state.

Annexes

Annexe 1 - Anomie Scales

Individual Anomie

	Complete-ly agree	Rather agree	Difficult to answer	Rather disagree	Completely disagree
A. I feel all alone everyday	1	2		4	5
B. No matter how hard people try in life it does not make any difference.	1	2		4	5
C. Unlike most people, I enjoy my life.					
D. I feel discriminated against.	1	2		4	5
E. My whole world feels like it is falling apart.	1	2		4	5
F. I am happy about the way in which my life plans are coming to fruition.					
G. I wish I were someone important.	1	2		4	5
H. It is hard for me to tell what is right and wrong these days.	1	2		4	5
I. I don't like to live by society's rules.	1	2		4	5
J. Whatever happens, I try to look on the bright side.					
K. Personally I don't see any future for myself.	1	2		4	5
L. Enjoy life while you can and tomorrow will take care of itself.	1	2		4	5
M. Personally, I am not satisfied with my life.	1	2		4	5
N. It seems to me that I'm not in control of my life, everything is determined without my knowledge.	1	2		4	5
O. Everything is progressing satisfactorily					

P. I would like to be liked by other people.	1	2		4	5
Q. I can easily resign myself with something I can't change in my life.	1	2		4	5

Social Anomie

	Com- pletely agree	Rather agree	Difficult to say	Rather disagree	Com- pletely disa- gree
A. The gap between the rich and the poor in our country is widening.	1	2		4	5
B. One cannot solve any problem without a bribe in our country.	1	2		4	5
C. There is no clear understanding in our society of what is bad and what is good nowadays.	1	2		4	5
D. Life in our country is getting more and more unstable.	1	2		4	5
E. Our society has a very low tolerance for opinion and behaviour which deviates from the mainstream.	1	2		4	5
F. Most people cannot be trusted nowadays.	1	2		4	5
G. Nowadays, most people are preoccupied with their own problems and deaf to those of others.	1	2		4	5
H. The end justifies the means.	1	2		4	5
I. There is no justification for lawbreaking.	1	2		4	5
J. I will bribe if I am sure it helps to get what I want.	1	2		4	5
K. Life is generally unjust.	1	2		4	5

Annexe 2 - Correlation table between Health and various factors

Correlations

		Social Anomie	Individual Anomie	Socio-economic Status	Trust	Social Instability	Satisfaction	Sex	Age
Health	Pearson Correlation	-.189	-.285	.084	.044	-.151	.234	-.245	-.048
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.001	.064	.000	.000	.000	.043
	N	1764	1765	1688	1749	1754	1759	1771	1771
	explained variance in %	3.559	8.112	.700	.196	2.279	5.490	6.026	.231